



ALBANY, N. Y.

POEMS BY  
JEAN INGELow



JEAN INGELOW<sup>c</sup>

From a photograph by Elliott & Fry

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BY  
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WITH AN INTRODUCTION  
BY  
ALICE MEYNELL

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All this is pleasant, but there are two poems that are much more— *The High Tide* and *The Coming in of the Mer-maiden*. *The High Tide* is best printed with modern spelling inasmuch as though it pretends to be a tale told at her spinning-wheel by a woman in the sixteenth century it is manifestly a tale written at her desk by a woman in the nineteenth. *The level sun like ruddy ore* a figure *dark against day's golden death* the image of the rearing *Land's met by the tidal wave* shaped like a curling *snow-white cloud* and the *sobbing river*—all these are unmistakably modern but not to be complained of unless when the author spells up *uppe*. *The High Tide* has the rare quality of simple dramatic narrative of action. Assuredly nothing could be better told than this—

So far so fast the eygre drove  
The heart had hardly time to beat,  
Before a shallow seething wave  
Saddled in the grasses at our feet  
The feet had hardly time to flee  
Before it brake against the knee  
And all the world was in the sea.

Yet finer if finer could be—the briefest  
most active most spacious lines—follow—

That flew strewn wrecks about the grass,  
That ebb swept out the flocks to sea.

*The Boston bells ceasing not to ring the tune of dismay, "The Brides of Enderby", fill the stanzas with a changing, swelling, and hurrying music that is most beautiful, and the whole poem gives a kind of reluctant proof of the degree of true and legitimate art of which this poet was capable, but to which she seldom set her hand in earnest*

*Jean Ingelow is imitable in the fashion she set, of doves, milking-pails, daisies, and weather (with its few rhymes)—a fashion of which the day is long over-past. But she is not imitable in the brief masterly passages of her best and more truly memorable lyrics*

ALICE MEYNELL

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An empty sky a world of heather  
Purple of foxglove, yellow of broom  
We two among them wading together  
Shaking out honey treading perfume.

Crowds of bees are giddy with clover  
• Crowds of grasshoppers skip at our feet,  
Crowds of larks at their matins hang over  
Thanking the Lord for a life so sweet.

Flusheth the rise with her purple favour  
Gloweth the cleft with her golden ring  
Twixt the two brown butterflies waver  
Lightly settle and sleepily swing

We two walk till the purple dieth  
And short dry grass under foot is brown  
But one little streak at a distance lieth  
Green like a ribbon to prank the down.

## *DIVIDED*

### II

Over the grass we stepped unto it,  
And God He knoweth how blithe we  
were!

Never a voice to bid us eschew it  
Hey the green ribbon that showed so fair!

Hey the green ribbon! we kneeled beside  
it,

We parted the grasses dewy and sheen,  
Drop over drop there filtered and slid  
A tiny bright beck that trickled between

Tinkle, tinkle, sweetly it sung to us,  
Light was our talk as of faëry bells—  
Faery wedding-bells faintly rung to us  
Down in their fortunate parallels

Hand in hand, while the sun peered over,  
We lapped the grass on that youngling  
spring,  
Swept back its rushes, smoothed its clover,  
And said, "Let us follow it westering"

### III

A dappled sky, a world of meadows,  
Circling above us the black rooks fly  
Forward, backward, lo, their dark shadows  
Flit on the blossoming tapestry—

## *DIVIDED*

Flit on the beck for her long grass parteth  
As hair from a maid's bright eyes blown  
back

And lo the sun like a lover darteth  
His flattering smile on her wayward  
track.

Sing on! we sing in the glorious weather  
Till one steps over the tiny strand  
So narrow in sooth that still together  
On either brink we go hand in hand.

The beck grows wider the hands must  
sever

On either margin our songs all done  
We move apart while she singeth ever  
• Taking the course of the stooping sun

He prays "Come over"—I may not follow  
I cry "Return"—but he cannot come  
We speak we laugh but with voices hol-  
low

Our hands are hanging our hearts are  
numb

### IV

A breathing sigh a sigh for answer  
A little talking of outward things  
The careless beck is a merry dancer  
Keeping sweet time to the air she sings.

## *DIVIDED*

A little pain when the beck grows wider,  
    "Cross to me now—for her wavelets  
    swell "

"I may not cross"—and the voice beside her  
    Faintly reacheth, though heeded well

No backward path, ah! no returning,  
    No second crossing that ripple's flow  
"Come to me now, for the west is burning,  
    Come ere it darkens,"—"Ah, no! ah,  
    no!"

Then cries of pain, and arms outreaching—  
    The beck grows wider and swift and  
    deep  
Passionate words as of one beseeching—  
    The loud beck drowns them, we walk,  
    and weep

### v

A yellow moon in splendour drooping,  
    A tired queen with her state oppressed,  
Low by rushes and swordgrass stooping,  
    Lies she soft on the waves at rest

The desert heavens have felt her sadness,  
    Her earth will weep her some dewy  
    tears,  
The wild beck ends her tune of gladness,  
    And goeth stilly as soul that fears

## DIVIDED

We two walk on in our grassy places  
On either marge of the moonlit flood  
With the moon's own sadness in our faces  
Where joy is withered, blossom and bud.

### VI

A shady freshness, chafers whirring  
A little piping of leaf-hid birds  
A flutter of wings, a fitful stirring  
A cloud to the eastward snowy as curds.

Bare grassy slopes, where kids are tethered

Round valleys like nests all ferny-lined  
Round hills, with fluttering tree-tops feathered

Swell high in their freckled robes behind.

A rose flush tender a thrill a quiver  
When golden gleams to the tree-tops glide

A flashing edge for the milk white river  
The beck, a river—with still sleek tide.

Broad and white and polished as silver  
On she goes under fruit laden trees  
Sunk in leafage cooeth the culver  
And plaineth of love's disloyalties.

## *DIVIDED*

Glitters the dew and shines the river,  
Up comes the lily and dries her bell,  
But two are walking apart for ever,  
And wave their hands for a mute far-  
well

### VII

A braver swell, a swifter sliding,  
The river hasteth, her banks recede  
Wing-like sails on her bosom gliding  
Bear down the lily and drown the reed

Stately prows are rising and bowing  
(Shouts of mariners winnow the air),  
And level sands for banks endowing  
The tiny green ribbon that showed so  
fair

While, O my heart! as white sails shiver,  
And crowds are passing, and banks  
stretch wide,  
How hard to follow, with lips that quiver,  
That moving speck on the far-off side!

Farther, farther—I see it—know it—  
My eyes brim over, it melts away  
Only my heart to my heart shall show it  
As I walk desolate day by day

## *DIVIDED*

### VIII

And yet I know past all doubting truly—  
A knowledge greater than grief can  
dim—

I know as he loved, he will love me  
duly—

Yea, better—e'en better than I love him

And as I walk by the vast calm river  
The awful river so dread to see,

I say Thy breadth and thy depth for  
ever

Are bridged by his thoughts that cross  
to me."



# Honours



## PART I

*A Scholar is musing on his want of success*

To strive—and fail    Yes, I did strive and  
fail,

I set mine eyes upon a certain night  
To find a certain star—and could not hail  
With them its deep-set light

Fool that I was! I will rehearse my fault

I, wingless, thought myself on high to  
lift

Among the winged—I set these feet that  
halt

To run against the swift

And yet this man, that loved me so, can  
write—

That loves me, I would say, can let me  
see,

Or fain would have me think, he counts  
but light

These Honours lost to me

## HONOURS

### *The Letter of his friend*

What are they? that old house of yours  
    which gave  
Such welcomes oft to me, the sunbeams  
    fall  
Still down the squares of blue and white  
    which pave  
    Its hospitable hall.

A brave old house! a garden full of bees  
Large dropping poppies and Queen hol-  
    thocks  
With butterflies for crowns—tree peonies  
    And pinks and goldilocks.

Go when the shadow of your house is  
    long  
Upon the garden—when some new  
    walked bird  
Pecking and fluttering chirps a sudden  
    song  
    And not a leaf is stirred

But every one drops dew from either  
    edge  
Upon its fellow while an amber ray  
Slants up among the tree-tops like a wedge  
    Of liquid gold—to play

## HONOURS

“Over and under them, and so to fall  
Upon that lane of water lying below—  
That piece of sky let in, that you do call  
A pond, but which I know

“To be a deep and wondrous world, for I  
Have seen the trees within it—marvel-  
lous things  
So thick no bird betwixt their leaves could  
fly

But she would smite her wings,—

“Go there, I say, stand at the water’s  
brink,  
And shoals of spotted grayling you shall  
see  
Basking between the shadows—look, and  
think

‘This beauty is for me,

“‘For me this freshness in the morning  
hours,  
For me the water’s clear tranquillity,  
For me the soft descent of chestnut flowers,  
The cushat’s cry for me,

“‘The lovely laughter of the wind-swayed  
wheat,  
The easy slope of yonder pastoral hill,

## *HONOURS*

The sodgy brook whereby the red line  
meet

And wade and drink their fill.

Then saunter down that terrace whence  
the sea

All fair with wing-like sails you may  
discern

Be glad, and say This beauty is for  
me—

A thing to love and learn

For me the bounding in of tides for me  
The laying bare of sands when they re-  
treat

The purple flush of calms the sparkling  
glee

When waves and sunshine meet.

So after gazing homeward turn and  
mount

To that long chamber in the roof there  
tell

Your heart the laid up lore it holds to  
count

And prize and ponder well.

The lookings onward of the race before  
It had a past to make it look behind

## HONOURS

Its reverent wonders, and its doubtings  
    sore,  
    Its adorations blind,

“The thunder of its war-songs, and the  
    glow  
    Of chants to freedom by the old world  
    sung,  
The sweet love cadences that long ago  
    Dropped from the old-world tongue

“And then this new-world lore that takes  
    account  
    Of tangled star-dust, maps the triple  
    whirl  
Of blue and red and argent worlds that  
    mount  
    And greet the IRISH EARI,

“Or float across the tube that HERSCHEL  
    sways,  
    Like pale-rose chaplets, or like sapphire  
    mist,  
Or hang or droop along the heavenly ways,  
    Like scarves of amethyst

“O strange it is and wide the new-world  
    lore,  
    For next it treateth of our native dust!

## HONOURS

Must dig out buried monsters and explore  
The green earth's fruitful crust

Must write the story of her seething  
youth—

How lizards paddled in her lukewarm  
suns

Must show the cones she ripened and  
forsooth

Count seasons on her trees

Must know her weight and pry into  
her age

Count her old beach lines by their tidal  
swell

Her sunken mountains name, her craters  
gauge

Her cold volcanoes tell

And treat her as a ball that one might  
pass

From this hand to the other—such a  
ball

As he could measure with a blade of grass  
And say it was but small!

Honours! O friend I pray you bear  
with me

The grass hath time to grow in meadow  
lands

## HONOURS

And leisurely the opal murmuring sea  
Breaks on her yellow sands,

“And leisurely the ring-dove on her nest  
Broods till her tender chick will peck  
the shell,  
And leisurely down fall from ferny crest  
The dew-drops on the well,

“And leisurely your life and spirit grew,  
With yet the time to grow and ripen  
free  
No judgment past withdraws that boon  
from you,  
Nor granteth it to me

“Still must I plod, and still in cities moil,  
From precious leisure, learned leisure  
far,  
Dull my best self with handling common  
soil,  
Yet mine those honours are

“Mine they are called, they are a name  
which means,  
‘This man had steady pulses, tranquil  
nerves,  
Here, as in other fields, the most he gleans  
Who works and never swerves

## HONOURS

We measure not his mind we cannot  
tell

What lieth under over or beside  
The test we put him to he doth excel  
We know where he is tried

But, if he boast some farther excel  
lence—

Mind to create as well as to attain  
To sway his peers by golden eloquence,  
As wind doth shift a fane

To sing among the poets — we are  
nought

We cannot drop a line into that sea  
And read its fathoms off nor gauge a  
thought  
Nor map a smile.

It may be of all voices sublunar  
The only one he echoes we did try  
We may have come upon the only star  
That twinkles in his sky

And so it was with me."

O false my friend!  
False false a random charge, a blame  
undue



## HONOURS

Wrest not fair reasoning to a crooked  
end

False, false, as you are true!

But I read on "And so it was with  
me,

Your golden constellations lying apart  
They neither hailed nor greeted heartily,  
Nor noted on their chart

"And yet to you and not to me belong  
Those finer instincts that, like second  
sight

And hearing, catch creation's undersong,  
And see by inner light

"You are a well, whereon I, gazing,  
see

Reflections of the upper heavens—a  
well

From whence come deep, deep echoes up  
to me—

Some underwave's low swell

"I cannot soar into the heights you show,  
Nor dive among the deeps that you re-  
veal,

But it is much that high things ARE to  
know,

That deep things ARE to feel

## HONOURS

'Tis yours, not mine to pluck out of  
your breast  
Some human truth whose workings re-  
condite  
Were unattired in words, and manifest  
And hold it forth to light

And cry Behold this thing that I have  
found.  
And though they knew not of it till that  
day  
Nor should have done with no man to  
expound  
Its meaning yet they say

We do accept it lower than the shoals  
We skim this diver went nor did create  
But find it for us deeper in our souls  
Than we can penetrate

You were to me the world's interpreter  
The man that taught me Nature's un-  
known tongue  
And to the notes of her wild dulcimer  
First set sweet words and sung

And what am I to you? A steady hand  
To hold a steadfast heart to trust  
withal

## HONOURS

Merely a man that loves you, and will  
stand

By you, whate'er befall

“But need we praise his tendance tutelar  
Who feeds a flame that warms him?”

Yet 'tis true

I love you for the sake of what you are,  
And not of what you do —

“As heaven's high twins, whereof in  
Tyrian blue

The one revolveth through his course  
immense

Might love his fellow of the damask hue,  
For like, and difference

“For different pathways evermore decreed  
To intersect, but not to interfere,

For common goal, two aspects, and one  
speed,

One centre and one year,

“For deep affinities, for drawings strong,  
That by their nature each must needs  
exert,

For loved alliance, and for union long,  
That stands before desert

## HONOURS

And yet desert makes brighter not the  
less

For nearest his own star he shall not  
fall

To think those rays unmatched for noble-  
ness

That distance counts but pale.

Be pale afar since still to me you shine  
And must while Nature's eldest law shall  
hold "—

Ah there's the thought which makes his  
random line

Dear as refined gold!

Then shall I drink this draught of oxymel

•Part sweet part sharp? Myself o'er-  
prized to know

Is sharp the cause is sweet and truth  
to tell

Few would that cause forgo

Which is, that thou of all the men on earth  
Doth love me well enough to count me  
great—

To think my soul and his of equal girth—  
O liberal estimate!

And yet it is so he is bound to me

For human love makes aliens near of kin

## HOVOURS

As such an one being brought to sudden  
stand

Doubts all his foregone path if t were  
the true

And turns to this and then to the other  
hand

As knowing not what to do —

So I being checked am with my path  
at strife

Which led to such a chasm and there  
doth end.

False path! it cost me priceles years of  
life

My well-beloved friend.

There fell a flute when Ganymede went up—

The flute that he was wont to play  
upon

It dropped beside the jonquil & milk white  
cup,

And freckled cowslips wan—

Dropped from his heedless hand when  
dazed and mute

He sailed upon the eagle's quivering  
wing

Up and panting — ay it dropped — the  
flute

Erewhile a cherished thing

## HONOURS

Among the delicate grasses and the  
bells

Of crocuses that spotted a rill side,  
I picked up such a flute, and its clear  
swells

To my young lips replied

I played thereon, and its response was  
sweet,

But lo, they took from me that solacing  
reed

“O shame!” they said, “such music is  
not meet,

Go up like Ganymede

“Go up, despise these humble grassy  
things,

Sit on the golden edge of yonder cloud ”

Alas! though ne’er for me those eagle  
wings

Stooped from their eyrie proud

My flute! and flung away its echoes  
sleep,

But as for me, my life-pulse beateth  
low,

And like a last-year’s leaf, enshrouded  
deep

Under the drifting snow,

## HONOURS

Or like some vessel wrecked upon the  
    sand  
Of torrid swamps with all her mer-  
    chandise  
And left to rot betwixt the sea and land  
    My helpless spirit lies.

Rueing I think for what then was I  
    made  
What end appointed for — what use de-  
    signed?  
Now let me right this heart that was  
    betrayed —  
    Unveil these eyes gone blind.

My well-beloved friend at noon to-day  
Over our cliffs a white mist lay un-  
    furled  
So thick one standing on their brink  
    might say  
    Lo, here doth end the world.

A white abyss beneath and nought be-  
    side  
Yet hark! a cropping sound not ten  
    feet down:  
Soon I could trace some browsing lambs  
    that hied  
    Through rock-paths cleft and brown.

## HONOURS

And here and there green tufts of grass  
    peered through,  
    Salt lavender, and sea thrift, then be-  
    hold,  
The mist, subsiding ever, bared to view  
    A beast of giant mould

She seemed a great sea monster lying  
    content  
    With all her cubs about her but deep—  
    deep—  
The subtle mist went floating, its descent  
    Showed the world's end was steep

It shook, it melted, shaking more, till, lo,  
    The sprawling monster was a rock,  
    her brood  
Were boulders, whereon seamew's white  
    as snow  
    Sat watching for their food

Then once again it sank, its day was  
    done  
    Part rolled away, part vanished utterly,  
And glimmering softly under the white sun,  
    Behold ' a great white sea

O that the mist which veileth my To-come  
    Would so dissolve and yield unto mine  
    eyes



## HONOURS

A worthy path! I'd count not wearisome  
Long toil, nor enterprise,

But strain to reach it ay with wrestlings  
stout  
And hopes that even in the dark will  
grow  
'Like plants in dungeons reaching feelers  
out)  
And ploddings wary and slow

Is there such path already made to fit  
The measure of my foot? It shall atone  
For much, if I at length may light on it  
And know it for mine own

But is there none? why then 'tis more  
than well  
And glad at heart myself will hew one  
out,  
Let me be only sure for sooth to tell  
The sorest dole is doubt—

Doubt, a blank twilight of the heart,  
which mares  
All sweetest colours in its dimness same  
A soul-mist, through whose rifts familiar  
stars  
Beholding we misname.

## HONOURS

A ripple on the inner sea, which shakes  
Those images that on its breast reposed,  
A fold upon a wind-swayed flag that  
breaks

The motto it disclosed

O doubt! O doubt! I know my destiny,  
I feel thee fluttering bird-like in my  
breast,  
I cannot loose, but I will sing to thee,  
And flatter thee to rest

There is no certainty, "my bosom's guest",  
No proving for the things whereof ye  
wot,  
For, like the dead to sight unmanifest,  
They are, and they are not

But surely as they are, for God is truth,  
And as they are not, for we saw them  
die,  
So surely from the heaven drops light for  
youth,  
If you will walk thereby

And can I see this light? It may be so,  
"But see it thus and thus," my fathers  
said

The living do not rule this world, ah no!  
It is the dead, the dead

## HONOURS

Shall I be slave to every noble soul  
Study the dead and to their spirits  
bend  
Or learn to read my own heart's folded  
scroll,  
And make self rule my end?

Thought from *without*—O shall I take on  
trust  
And life from others modelled steal or  
win  
Or shall I heave to light and clear of  
rust  
My true life from *within*?

O let me be myself! But where O  
where  
Under this heap of precedent this  
mound  
Of customs, modes, and maxims cum-  
brance rare  
Shall the *Myself* be found?

O thou *Myself* thy fathers thee debarred  
None of their wisdom but their folly  
came  
Therewith they smoothed thy path but  
made it hard  
For thee to quit the same.

## HONOURS

With glosses they obscured God's natural  
truth,  
And with tradition tarnished His re-  
vealed,  
With vain protections they endangered  
youth,  
With layings bare they sealed

What aileth thee, myself? Alas! thy  
hands  
Are tired with old opinions — heir and  
son,  
Thou hast inherited thy father's lands  
And all his debts thereon

O that some power would give me Adam's<sup>c</sup>  
eyes!  
Or for the straight simplicity of Eve!  
For I see nought, or grow, poor fool,  
too wise  
With seeing to believe

Exemplars may be heaped until they hide  
The rules that they were made to render  
plain,  
Love may be watched, her nature to de-  
cide,  
Until love's self doth wane

## HONOURS

Ah me! and when forgotten and foregone  
We leave the learning of departed  
days  
And cease the generations past to con  
Their wisdom and their ways—

When fain to learn we lean into the  
dark,  
And grope to feel the floor of the  
abyss  
Or find the secret boundary lines which  
mark  
Where soul and matter kiss—

Fair world! these puzzled souls of ours  
grow weak  
With beating their bruised wings against  
the rim  
That bounds their utmost flying when  
they seek  
The distant and the dim.

We pant, we strain like birds against  
their wires;  
Are sick to reach the vast and the  
beyond —  
And what avails if still to our desires  
Those far-off gulfs respond?

## HONOURS

Contentment comes not therefore, still  
there lies

An outer distance when the first is  
hailed,  
And still for ever yawns before our eyes  
An UTMOST—that is veiled

Searching those edges of the universe,  
We leave the central fields a fallow  
part,  
To feed the eye more precious things  
amerce,  
And starve the darkened heart

Then all goes wrong the old foundations  
rock,  
One scorns at him of old who gazed  
unshod,  
One striking with a pickaxe thinks the  
shock  
Shall move the seat of God

A little way, a very little way  
(Life is so short), they dig into the  
rind,  
And they are very sorry, so they say,—  
Sorry for what they find

But truth is sacred—ay, and must be told  
There is a story long beloved of man,

## HONOURS

We must forgo it for it will not hold—  
Nature had no such plan.

And then if God had said it "some  
should cry  
We have the story from the fountain-  
head "

Why then what better than the old  
reply  
The first Yea HATH God said?"

The garden O the garden, must it be  
Source of our hope and our most dear  
regret?

The ancient story must it no more shun  
How man may win it yea?

And all upon the Titan child's decree  
The baby science born but yesterday  
That in its rash unlearned infancy  
With hell and stone at play

And delving in the outwork of the  
world,  
And little crevices that it could reach  
Discovered certain bones laid up and  
fured  
Under an ancient beach

## HONOURS

And other waifs that lay to its young  
mind

Some fathoms lower than 'they ought  
to lie,

By gain whereof it could not fail to find  
Much proof of ancientry,

Hints at a pedigree withdrawn and vast,  
Terrible deeps, and old obscurities,  
Or soulless origin, and twilight passed  
In the primeval seas,

Whereof it tells, as thinking it hath been  
Of truth not meant for man inheritor,  
As if this knowledge Heaven had ne'er  
foreseen

And not provided for!

Knowledge ordained to live! although  
the fate

Of much that went before it was—  
to die,

And be called ignorance by such as wait  
Till the next drift comes by

O marvellous credulity of man!

If God indeed kept secret, couldst thou  
know

Or follow up the mighty Artisan  
Unless He willed it so?



## HONOURS

And canst thou of the Maker think us  
    worth  
That of the Made He shall be found  
    at fault,  
And dream of wresting from him hidden  
    truth  
    By force or by assault?

But if He keeps not secret—if thine eyes  
    He openeth to His wondrous work of  
    Life—  
Think how in soberm thy wisdom lies  
    And have the grace to wait

Wait not against the half-learned lesson  
    fret  
\* Nor chide at old belief as if it erred,  
Because thou canst not reconcile as yet  
    The Worker and the word.

Either the Worker did in ancient days  
    Give us the word His tale of love and  
    night;  
(And if in truth He gave it us who say  
    He did not give it right?)

Or else He gave it not and then indeed  
    We know not if He is—by whom our  
    years

## *HONOURS*

Are portioned, who the orphan moons  
doth lead,  
And the unfathered spheres

We sit unowned upon our burial sod,  
And know not whence we come or  
whose we be,  
Comfortless mourners for the mount of  
God,  
The rocks of Calvary

Bereft of heaven, and of the long-loved  
page  
Wrought us by some who thought with  
death to cope,  
Despairing comforters, from age to age  
Sowing the seeds of hope

Gracious deceivers, who have lifted us  
Out of the slough where passed our  
unknown youth,  
Beneficent liars, who have gifted us  
With sacred love of truth !

Farewell to them yet pause ere thou  
unmoor  
And set thine ark adrift on unknown  
seas,

## HO\OURS

How wert thou bettered so or never  
secure  
Thou and thy destinies?

And if thou searchest and art made to  
fear  
Facing of unread riddles dark and  
hard,  
And mastering not their majesty austere  
Their meaning locked and barred:

How would it make the weight and  
wonder less  
If, lifted from immortal shoulders down  
The worlds were cast on seas of empti-  
ness  
In realms without a crown

And (if there were no God) were I it  
to rue  
Dominion of the air and of the fire?  
Then if there be a God Let God be  
true  
And every man a liar "

But as for me I do not peak a one  
That is exempt I am with life at  
feud;

## HONOURS

My heart reproacheth me, as there were  
none

Of so small gratitude

Wherewith shall I console thee, heart o'  
mine,

And still thy yearning and resolve thy  
doubt?

That which I know, and that which I  
divine,

Alas ! have left thee out

I have aspired to know the might of God,  
As if the story of his love was furled,  
Nor sacred foot the grasses e'er had trod  
Of this redeemed world —

Have sunk my thoughts as lead into the  
deep,

To grope for that abyss whence evil  
grew,

And spirits of ill, with eyes that cannot  
weep,

Hungry and desolate flew,

As if their legions did not one day crowd  
The death-pangs of the Conquering  
Good to see !

As if a sacred head had never bowed  
In death for man—for me,

## HONOURS

Not ransomed back the soul beloved  
the sons  
Of men from thralldom with the netter  
kings  
In that dark country where those evil  
ones  
Trail their unhallowed wings

And didst Thou love the race that loved  
not Thee  
And didst Thou take to heav'n a human  
brow?  
Dost plead with man's voice by the mar-  
vellous sea?  
Art Thou his kinsman now?

O God O kinsman loved but not enough!  
O man with eyes may see all & death  
Whose feet have toiled along our path  
ways rough  
Whose lips drawn human breath!

By that one likeness which is ours and  
Thine  
By that one nature which doth hold us  
kin,  
By that high heaven where sinless Thou  
dost shine  
To draw us sinners in

## HONOURS

By Thy last silence in the judgment-hall,  
By long foreknowledge of the deadly  
tree,  
By darkness, by the wormwood and the  
gall,  
I pray Thee visit me

Come, lest this heart should, cold and  
cast away,  
Die ere the guest adored she enter-  
tain—  
Lest eyes which never saw Thine earthly  
day  
Should miss Thy heavenly reign

Come weary-eyed from seeking in the  
night  
Thy wanderers strayed upon the path-  
less wold,  
Who wounded, dying, cry to Thee for  
light,  
And cannot find their fold

And deign, O Watcher, with the sleep-  
less brow,  
Pathetic in its yearning—deign reply  
Is there, O is there aught that such as  
Thou  
Wouldst take from such as I ?

## HONOURS

Are there no briars across Thy pathway  
thrust?

Are there no thorns that compass it  
about?

Are any stones that Thou wilt crouch to  
trust

My hands to gather out?

O if Thou wilt and if such life  
might be

It were a cure for doubt regret delay—  
Let my lost pathway go—what askest  
me?—

There is a better way

What though unmarked the happy work  
man toil

And break unthanked of man the sub-  
born clod?

It is enough for sacred is the soil

Dear are the hills of God.

Far better in its place the lowliest bird

Should sing aright to Him the lowliest  
song

Than that a seraph strayed should take  
the word

And sing His glory wrong

## *HONOURS*

Friend, it is time to work I say to thee,  
Thou dost all earthly good by much  
excel,  
Thou and God's blessing are enough for  
me  
My work, my work—farewell !



## Requiescat in Pace!

O my heart my heart is sick and lunk  
and awaiting  
The lad took up his knapsack he went  
he went his way;  
And I looked on for his coming as a  
prisoner through the grate  
Looks and looks and looks and wishes  
for its open day

On the wild purple mountains, all alone  
with no other  
The strong terrible mountains he longed  
he longed to be  
And he stooped to kiss his father and he  
stooped to kiss his mother  
And till I said "Adieu sweet Sir" he  
quite forgot me

He wore of their white raiment the ghostly  
capes that screen them  
Of the storm winds that beat them, their  
cloak of mist and scars

## *REQUIESCAT IN PACE'*

And the paradise of purple, and the golden  
slopes atween them,  
And fields, where grow God's gentian  
bells, and His crocus stars

He wrote of frail gauzy clouds, that drop  
on them like fleeces,  
And make green their fir forests, and  
feed their mosses hoar,  
Or come sailing up the valleys, and get  
wrecked and go to pieces,  
Like sloops against their cruel strength  
then he wrote no more

O the silence that came next, the patience  
and long aching'

They never said so much as "He was  
a dear loved son,"

Not the father to the mother moaned, that  
dreary stillness breaking  
"Ah! wherefore did he leave us—this,  
our only one?"

They 'sat within, as waiting, until the  
neighbours prayed them,  
At Cromer, by the sea-coast, 't were peace  
and change to be,  
And to Cromer, in their patience, or that  
urgency affrayed them,  
Or because the tidings tarried, they  
came, and took me

## *REQUIESCAT IN PACE!*

It was three months and over since the  
dear lad had started

On the green downs at Cromer I sat  
to see the view

On an open space of herbage, where the  
ling and fern had parted,

Betwixt the tall white lighthouse towers,  
the old and the new

Below me lay the wide sea, the scarlet  
sun was stooping

And he dyed the waste water as with  
a scarlet dye

And he dyed the lighthouse towers every  
bird with white wing swooping

Took his colours and the cliffs did and  
the yawning sky

Over grass came that strange flush and  
over ling and heather

Over flocks of sheep and lambs and  
over Cromer town

And each filmy cloudlet crossing drifted  
like a scarlet feather

Torn from the folded wings of clouds,  
while he settled down.

When I looked, I dared not sigh — In the  
light of God's splendour

With his daily blue and gold who am  
I? what am I?

## *REQUIESCAT IN PACE'*

But that passion and outpouring seemed  
an awful sign and tender,  
Like the blood of the Redeemer, shown  
on earth and sky

O for comfort, O the waste of a long doubt  
and trouble!

On that sultry August eve trouble had  
me meek,

I was tired of my sorrow—O so faint,  
for it was double

In the weight of its oppression, that  
I could not speak!

And a little comfort grew, while the  
dimmed eyes were feeding,

And the dull ears with murmur of waters  
satisfied,

But a dream came slowly nigh me, all my  
thoughts and fancy leading

Across the bounds of waking life to  
the other side

And I dreamt that I looked out, to the  
waste waters turning,

And saw the flakes of scarlet from wave  
to wave tossed on,

And the scarlet mix with azure, where  
a heap of gold lay burning

On the clear remote sea reaches, for  
the sun was gone

## REQUIESCAT IN PACE!

Then I thought a far-off shout dropped  
across the still water—

A question as I took it for soon an  
answer came

From the tall white ruined lighthouse If  
it be the old man's daughter

That we wot of "ran the answer what  
then—who's to blame?"

I looked up at the lighthouse all roofless  
and storm-broken

A great white bird sat on it with neck  
stretched out to sea

Unto somewhat which was sailing in a  
skiff the bird had spoken

And a trembling seized my spirit, for  
they talked of me.

I was the old man's daughter the bird  
went on to name him

He loved to count the starlings as he  
sat in the sun

Long ago he served with Nelson and his  
story did not shame him

Ay the old man was a good man—  
and his work was done."

The skiff was like a crescent ghost of  
some moon departed

Frail white, she rocked and curtsied  
as the red wave she crossed,

## *REQUIESCAT IN PACE'*

And the thing within sat paddling, and  
the crescent dipped and darted,  
Flying on, again was shouting, but  
the words were lost

I said, "That thing is hooded, I could  
hear but that floweth  
The great hood below its mouth " then  
the bird made reply,  
"If they know not, more's the pity, for  
the little shrewmouse knoweth,  
And the kite knows, and the eagle,  
and the glead and pye "

And he stooped to whet his beak on the  
stones of the coping,  
And when once more the shout came,  
in querulous tones he spake,  
"What I said was 'more's the pity', if  
the heart be long past hoping,  
Let it say of death, 'I know it,' or doubt  
on and break

"Men must die—one dies by day, and  
near him moans his mother,  
They dig his grave, tread it down, and  
go from it full loth  
And one dies about the midnight, and the  
wind moans, and no other,  
And the snows give him a burial—and  
God loves them both

## *REQUIESCAT IN PACE!*

The first hath no advantage—it shall not  
soothe his slumber  
That a lock of his brown hair his father  
aye shall keep  
For the last he nothing grudgeth it shall  
nought his quiet cumber  
That in a golden mesh of his callow  
eaglets sleep

Men must die when all is said, e'en the  
late and glead know it,  
And the lad's father knew it and the  
lad, the lad too  
It was never kept a secret waters bring  
it and winds blow it,  
And he met it on the mountain—why  
then make ado?

With that he spread his white wings, and  
swept across the water  
Lit upon the hooded head and it and  
all went down  
And they laughed as they went under and  
I woke, the old man's daughter"  
And looked across the slope of grass  
and at Cromer town.

And I said Is that the sky all grey  
and silver suited?"  
And I thought Is that the sea that  
lies so white and wan?

## *REQUIESCAT IN PACE'*

I have dreamed as I remember givé me  
time—I was reputed  
Once to have a steady courage—O, I  
fear 'tis gone!"

And I said, "Is this my heart? if it be,  
low 'tis beating, "  
So he lies on the mountain, hard by  
the eagles' brood,  
I have had a dream this evening, while  
the white and gold were fleeting,  
But I need not, need not tell it—where  
would be the good?"

"Where would be the good to them, his  
father and his mother?  
For the ghost of their dead hope ap-  
peareth to them still  
While a lonely watchfire smoulders, who  
its dying red would smother,  
That gives what little light there is to  
a darksome hill?"

I rose up, I made no moan, I did not  
cry nor falter,  
But slowly in the twilight I came to  
Cromer town  
What can wringing of the hands do that  
which is ordained to alter?  
He had climbed, had climbed the moun-  
tain, he would ne'er come down



*REQUIESCAT IN PACE!*

But O my first, O my best I could not  
choose but love thee

O to be a wild white bird, and seek  
thy rocky bed!

From my breast I'd give thee burial pluck  
the down and spread above thee

I would alt and sing thy requiem on the  
mountain head.

Fare thee well, my love of loves! would  
I had died before thee!

O to be at least a cloud that near  
thee I might flow

Solemnly approach the mountain weep  
away my being o'er thee,

And veil thy breast with icicles, and  
thy brow with snow!

Supper at  
the Mill



*Mother* Well, Frances

*Frances* Well, good mother, how are  
you?

*M* I'm hearty, lass, but warm, the  
weather's warm

I think 't is mostly warm on market days  
I met with George behind the mill said he,  
"Mother, go in and rest awhile "

*F* Ay, do,  
And stay to supper, put your basket down

*M* Why, now, it is not heavy?

*F* Willie, man,  
Get up and kiss your Granny Heavy, no!  
Some call good churning luck, but, luck  
or skill,

Your butter mostly comes as firm and  
sweet

As if 't was Christmas So you sold it all?

*M* All but this pat that I put by for,  
George,

He always loved my butter

*F* That he did

## SUPPER AT THE MILL

*M* And has your speckled hen brought off her brood?

*F* Not yet but that old duck I told you of

She hatched eleven out of twelve to-day

*Child.* And Granny they're so yellow

*M* Ay my lad

Yellow as gold—yellow as Willie's hair

*C.* They're all mine Granny—father says they're mine.

*M* To think of that!

*F* Yes, Granny only think!

Why father means to sell them when they're fat

And put the money in the savings bank

And all against our Willie goes to school

But Willie would not touch them—no not he

He knows that father would be angry else.

*C* But I want one to play with—O I want

A little yellow duck to take to bed!

*M* What! would ye rob the poor old mother then?

*F* Now Granny if you'll hold the babe awhile

\*Tis time I took up Willie to his crib.

[*Exit FRANCES.*]

## SUPPER AT THE MILL

[*Mother sings to the infant*]

Playing on the virginals,  
Who but I? Sae glad, sae free,  
Smelling for all cordials,  
The green mint and marjorie,  
Set among the budding broom  
Kingcup and daffodilly,  
By my side I made him room  
O love my Willie!

"Like me, love me, girl o' gowd,"  
Sang he to my nimble strain,  
+ Sweet his ruddy lips o'erflowed  
Till my heartstrings rang again  
By the broom, the bonny broom,  
Kingcup and daffodilly,  
In my heart I made him room  
O love my Willie!

"Pipe and play, dear heart," sang he,  
"I must go, yet pipe and play,  
Soon I'll come and ask of thee  
For an answer yea or nay,"  
And I waited till the flocks  
Panted in yon waters stilly,  
And the corn stood in the shocks  
O love my Willie!

I thought first when thou didst come  
I would wear the ring for thee,

## SUPPER AT THE MILL

But the year told out its sum  
Ere again thou sat'st by me;  
Thou hadst nought to ask that day  
By kingcup and daffodilly;  
I said neither yea nor nay:  
O love my Willie!

### *Enter GEORGE*

*G* Well mother 'tis a fortnight now  
or more

Since I set eyes on you.

*M* Ay George my dear  
I reckon you've been busy so have we

*G* And how does father?

*M* He gets through his work,  
But he grows stiff a little stiff my dear—  
He's not so young you know by twenty  
years

As I am—not so young by twenty years  
And I'm past sixty

*G* Yet he's hale and stout  
And seems to take a pleasure in his pipe  
And seems to take a pleasure in his cows  
And a pride too.

*M* And well he may my dear

*G* Give me the little one he tucks your  
arm  
He's such a kicking crowing wakeful  
rogue

## *SUPPER AT THE MILL*

He almost wears our lives out with his  
noise

Just at day-dawning, when we wish to  
sleep

What! you young villain, would you clench  
your fist

In father's curls? a dusty father, sure,  
And you're as clean as wax

Ay, you may laugh,  
But if you live a seven years more or so,  
These hands of yours will all be brown  
and scratched

With climbing after nest-eggs    They'll  
go down

As many rat-holes as are round the mere,  
And you'll love mud, all manner of mud  
and dirt,

As your father did afore you, and you'll  
wade

After young water-birds, and you'll get  
bogged

Setting of eel-traps, and you'll spoil your  
clothes,

And come home torn and dripping then,  
you know,

You'll feel the stick—you'll feel the stick,  
my lad!



## SUPPER AT THE MILL

With my half-dozen! Children, ay, for-  
sooth,  
They bring their own love with them  
when they come,  
But if they come not there is peace and  
rest,  
The pretty lambs! and yet she cries for  
more  
Why, the world's full of them, and so  
is heaven—

They are not rare

*G* No, mother, not at all,  
But Hannah must not keep our Fanny  
long—

She spoils her

*M* Ah! folks spoil their children now,  
When I was a young woman 't was not so,  
We made our children fear us, made them  
work,

Kept them in order

*G* Were not proud of them—  
Eh, mother?

*M* I set store by mine, 't is true,  
But then I had good cause

*G* My lad, d'ye hear?  
Your Granny was not proud, by no means  
proud!

She never spoilt your father—no, not she,  
Nor ever made him sing at harvest-home,  
Nor at the forge, nor at the baker's shop,





## *SUPPER AT THE MILL*

And I live higher, in the shade  
Of my old walnut-trees

So many lads and lasses small,  
To feed them all, to clothe them all,  
Must surely tax his wit,  
I see his thatch when I look out,  
His branching roses creep about,  
And vines half smother it

There white-haired urchins climb his eaves,  
And little watch-fires heap with leaves,  
And milky filberts hoard,  
And there his oldest daughter stands  
With downcast eyes and skilful hands  
Before her ironing board

o

She comforts all her mother's days,  
And with her sweet obedient ways  
She makes her labour light,  
So sweet to hear, so fair to see'  
O, she is much too good for me,  
That lovely Lettice White'

'Tis hard to feel oneself a fool'  
With that same lass I went to school—  
I then was great and wise,  
She read upon an easier book, &  
And I—I never cared to look  
Into her shy blue eyes

## *SUPPER AT THE MILL*

And now I know they must be there  
Sweet eyes, behind those lashes fair  
That will not raise their rim;  
If maids be shy he cures who can;  
But if a man be shy—a man—  
Why then the worse for him!

My mother cries, For such a lad  
A wife is easy to be had  
And always to be found;  
A finer scholar scarce can be,  
And for a foot and leg says she,  
He beats the country round!

My handsome boy must stoop his head  
To clear her door whom he would wed.  
Weak praise, but fondly sung!  
O mother! scholars sometimes fall—  
And what can foot and leg avail  
To him that wants a tongue?

When by her ironing board I sit  
Her little sisters round me flit,  
And bring me forth their store;  
Dark cluster grapes of dusty blue,  
And small sweet apples bright of hue  
And crimson to the core.

But she abideth silent, fair  
All shadad by her flaxen hair  
The blushes come and go;  
I look, and I no more can peak

## *SUPPER AT THE MILL*

Than the red sun that on her cheek  
Smiles as he lieth low

Sometimes the roses by the latch  
Or scarlet vine-leaves from her thatch  
Come sailing down like birds,  
When from their drifts her board I clear,  
She thanks me, but I scarce can hear  
The shyly uttered words

Oft have I wooed sweet Lettice White  
By daylight and by candlelight  
When we two were apart  
Some better day come on apace,  
And let me tell her face to face,  
"Maiden thou hast my heart "

How gently rock yon poplars high  
Against the reach of primrose sky  
With heaven's pale candles stored!  
He sees them all, sweet Lettice White,  
"e'en go sit again to-night  
Beside her ironing board!

Why, you young rascal! who would think  
it now?

No sooner do I stop than you look up  
What would you have your poor old  
father do?

'Twas a brave song, long-winded, and  
not loud

## SUPPER AT THE MILL

*M* He heard the bacon sputter on the  
fork,  
And heard his mother's step across the  
floor

Where did you get that song?—tis now  
to me.

*G* I bought it of a pedlar

*M* Did you so?  
Well you were always for the love-songs  
George.

*F* My dear just lay his head upon  
your arm  
And if you'll pace and sing two minutes  
more

He needs must sleep—his eyes are full  
of sleep.

*G* Do you sing mother

*F* Ay good mother do  
'Tis long since we have heard you.

*M* Like enough  
I'm an old woman, and the girls and  
lads

I used to sing to sleep o'er top me now  
What should I sing for?

*G* Why to pleasure us.  
Sing in the chimney corner where you  
sit

And I'll pace gently with the little one.

## SUPPER AT THE MILL

[ *Mother sings* ]

When sparrows build, and the leaves break  
forth,

My old sorrow wakes and cries,  
For I know there is dawn in the far, far  
north,

And a scarlet sun doth rise,  
Like a scarlet fleece the snow-field spreads,  
And the icy founts run free,  
And the bergs begin to bow their heads,  
And plunge, and sail in the sea

O my lost love, and my own, own love,  
And my love that loved me so!  
Is there never a clink in the world above  
Where they listen for words from below?   c  
Nay, I spoke once, and I grieved thee sore,  
I remember all that I said,  
And now thou wilt hear me no more—no more  
Till the sea gives up her dead

Thou didst set thy foot on the ship, and sail  
To the ice-fields and the snow,  
Thou wert sad, for thy love did nought avail,  
And the end I could not know,  
How could I tell I should love thee to-day,  
Whom that day I held not dear?  
How could I know I should love thee away  
When I did not love thee anear?

## SUPPER AT THE MILL

We shall walk no more through the wooden  
plain

With the faded bent overspread

We shall stand no more by the weeding m

While the dark wrack drives overhead;

We shall part no more to the wind and the  
rain,

Where thy last farewell was said;

But perhaps I shall meet thee and know  
thee again

When the sea gives up her dead.

At last at last and time he was  
indeed.

Turn back the cradle-quilt and lay him in

And mother will you please to draw your  
chair—

The supper is ready

## Scholar and Carpenter



While ripening corn grew thick and deep,  
And here and there men stood to reap,  
One morn I put my heart to sleep,  
And to the lanes I took my way  
The goldfinch on a thistle-head  
Stood scattering seedlets while she fed,  
The wrens their pretty gossip spread,  
Or joined a random roundelay

On hanging cobwebs shone the dew,  
And thick the wayside clovers grew,  
The feeding bee had much to do,  
So fast did honey-drops exude  
She sucked and murmured, and was gone,  
And lit on other blooms anon,  
The while I learned a lesson on  
The source and sense of quietude

For sheep-bells chiming from a wold,  
Or bleat of lamb within its fold,  
Or cooing of love-legends old  
To dove-wives make not quiet less,



## SCHOLAR AND CARPENTER

Ecstatic chirp of wing'd thing  
Or bubbling of the water spring  
Are sounds that more than silence bring,  
Itself and its delightfulness.

While thus I went to gladness fain  
I had but walked a mile or twain  
Before my heart woke up again.

As dreaming she had slept too late;  
The morning freshness that she viewed  
With her own meanings she endured  
And touched with her solitude  
The nature she did meditate.

If quiet is for it I wait;  
To it ah! let me wed my fate  
And like a sad wife supplicate  
My roving lord no more to flee  
If leisure is—but ah! tis not—  
'Tis long past praying for God wot  
The fashion of it men forgot  
About the age of chivalry

Sweet is the leisure of the bird;  
She craves no time for work deferred;  
Her wings are not to aching stirred  
Providing for her helpless ones.  
Fair is the leisure of the wheat  
All night the damps about it fleet

## SCHOLAR AND CARPENTER

All day it basketh in the heat,  
And grows, and whispers oisons

“Grand is the leisure of the earth,  
She gives her happy myriads birth,  
And after harvest fears not dearth,  
But goes to sleep in snow-wreaths dim  
Dread is the leisure up above  
The while He sits whose name is Love,  
And waits, as Noah did, for the dove,  
To wit if she would fly to him

“He waits for us, while, houseless things,  
We beat about with bruised wings  
On the dark floods and water-springs,  
The ruined world, the desolate sea,  
With open windows from the prime  
All night, all day, He waits sublime,  
Until the fullness of the time  
Decreed from His eternity

“Where is OUR leisure?—Give us rest  
Where is the quiet we possessed?  
We must have had it once—were blest  
With peace whose phantoms yet entice  
Sorely the mother of mankind  
Longed for the garden left behind,  
For we still prove some yearnings blind  
Inherited from Paradise ”

## SCHOLAR AND CARPENTER

Hold heart!" I cried for trouble  
sleeps

I hear no sound of aught that weeps  
I will not look into thy deeps—

I am afraid I am afraid!"

Afraid!" she saith; and yet 'tis true  
That what man dreads he still should  
view—

Should do the thing he fears to do  
And storm the ghosts in ambushad "

What good?" I sigh. Way raven  
meant

To straighten branches that are bent  
Or soothe an ancient discontent

The instinct of a race dethroned?  
Wh! doubly should that instinct go  
Must the four rivers cease to flow  
Nor yield those rumours sweet and low  
Wherewith man's life is undertoned."

Yet had I but the past " she cries

And it was lost I would arise

And comfort me some other wise

But more than loss about me clings

I am but restless with my race

The whi peps from a heavenly place

Once dropped among us seem to clasp

Rest with their prophet visitings.

## *SCHOLAR AND CARPENTER*

“The race is like a child, as yet  
Too young for all things to be set  
Plainly before him with no let

Or hindrance meet for his degree,  
But ne’ertheless by much too old  
Not to perceive that men withhold  
More of the story than is told,  
And so infer a mystery

“If the Celestials daily fly  
With messages on missions high,  
And float, our masts and turrets nigh,  
Conversing on Heaven’s great intents,  
What wonder hints of coming things,  
Whereto man’s hope and yearning clings,  
Should drop like feathers from their wings  
And give us vague presentiments?”

“And as the waxing moon can take  
The tidal waters in her wake  
And lead them round and round to break  
Obedient to her drawings dim,  
So may the movements of His mind,  
The first Great Father of mankind,  
Affect with answering movements blind,  
And draw the souls that breathe by Him

“We had a message long ago  
That like a river peace should flow,

## *SCHOLAR AND CARPENTER*

And Eden bloom again below

We heard and we began to wait  
Full soon that message men forgot  
Yet waiting is their destined lot  
And waiting for they know not what  
They strive with yearnings passionate

Regret and faith alike enchain  
There was a loss there comes a gain  
We stand at fault betwixt the twain  
And that is veiled for which we pant.  
Our lives are short our ten times seven  
We think the councils held in heaven  
Sit long ere yet that blissful leaven  
Work peace amongst the militant

• Then we blame God that sin should be  
Adam began it at the tree

The woman whom Thou gavest me  
And we adopt his dark device.  
O long Thou tarriest! come and reign  
And bring forgiveness in Thy train  
And give us in our hands again  
The apples of Thy Paradise."

Far-seeing heart! if that be all,  
The happy things that did not fall "  
I sighed from every coppice call.  
They never from that garden went

## SCHOLAR AND CARPENTER

Behold their joy, so comfort thee,  
Behold the blossom and the bee,  
For they are yet as good and free  
As when poor Eve was innocent

“But reason thus ‘If we sank low,  
If the lost garden we forgo,  
Each in his day, nor ever know  
But in our poet souls its face,  
Yet we may rise until we reach  
A height untold of in its speech—  
A lesson that it could not teach  
Learn in this darker dwelling-place’

“And reason on ‘We take the spoil,  
Loss made us poets, and the soil  
Taught us great patience in our toil,  
And life is kin to God through death  
Christ were not One with us but so,  
And if bereft of Him we go,  
Dearer the heavenly mansions grow,  
His home, to man that wandereth’

“Content thee so, and ease thy smart”  
With that she slept again, my heart,  
And I admired and took my part  
With crowds of happy things the while  
With open velvet butterflies  
That swung and spread their peacock eyes

## SCHOLAR AND CARPENTER

As if they cared no more to rise  
From off their beds of camomile.

The blackcaps in an orchard met  
Praising the berries while they ate  
The finch that flew her beak to whet  
Before she joined them on the tree  
The water mouse among the reeds—  
His bright eyes glancing black as beads,  
So happy with a bunch of seeds—  
I felt their gladness heartily

But I came on I smelt the hay  
And up the hills I took my way  
And down them still made holiday  
And walked and wearied not a whit  
But ever with the lane I went  
Until it dropped with steep descent,  
Cut deep into the rock, a tent  
Of maple branches roofing it.

Adown the rock small runlets wept  
And reckless ivies leaned and crept  
And little spots of sunshine slept  
On its brown steeps and made them fair  
And broader beams athwart it shot,  
Where martins cheeped in many a knot  
For they had taen a sandy plot  
And scooped another Petra there.

## SCHOLAR AND CARPENTER

And deeper down, hemmed in and hid  
From upper light and life amid  
The swallows gossiping, I thrid  
Its mazes, till the dipping land  
Sank to the level of my lane  
That was the last hull of the chain,  
And fair below I saw the plain  
That seemed cold cheer to reprimand

Half-drowned in sleepy peace it lay,  
As satiate with the boundless play  
Of sunshine on its green array  
And clear-cut hills of gloomy blue  
To keep it safe rose up behind,  
As with a charmed ring to bind  
The grassy sea, where clouds might find  
A place to bring their shadows to

I said, and blest that pastoral grace,  
"How sweet thou art, thou sunny place!  
Thy God approves thy smiling face "

But straight my heart put in her word,  
She said, "Albeit thy face I bless,  
There have been times, sweet wilderness,  
When I have wished to love thee less,  
Such pangs thy smile administered "

But, lo! I reached a field of wheat,  
And by its gate full clear and sweet





## SCHOLAR AND CARPENTER

Then to a runlet forth he went,  
And brought a wallet from the bent,  
And bade me to the meal, intent  
I should not quit his neighbourhood

“For here,” said he, “are bread and beer,  
And meat enough to make good cheer,  
Sir, eat with me, and have no fear,  
For none upon my work depend,  
Saving this child, and I may say  
That I am rich, for every day  
I put by somewhat, therefore stay,  
And to such eating condescend”

We ate The child—child fair to see—  
Began to cling about his knee,  
And he down leaning fatherly  
Received some softly-prattled prayer,  
He smiled as if to list were balm,  
And with his labour-hardened palm  
Pushed from the baby-forehead calm  
Those shining locks that clustered there

The rosy mouth made fresh essay—  
“O would he sing, or would he play?”  
I looked, my thought would make its  
way—

“Fair is your child of face and limb,  
The round blue eyes full sweetly shine”  
He answered me with glance benign—

## SCHOLAR AND CARPENTER

Ay Sir but he is none of mine  
Although I set great store by him.

With that as if his heart was fain  
To open—nathless not complain—  
He let my quiet questions gain  
His story Not of kin to me "  
Repeating but asleep awake  
For worse, for better him I take  
To cherish for my dead wife's sake  
And count him as her legacy

I married with the sweetest lass  
That ever stepped on meadow grass  
That ever at her looking-glass  
• Some pleasure took some natural care  
That ever swept a cottage floor  
And worked all day nor e'er gave o'er  
Till eve, then watched beside the door  
Till her good man should meet her there

But I lost all in its fresh prime  
My wife fell ill before her time—  
Just as the bells began to chime  
One Sunday morn. By next day's light  
Her little babe was born and dead,  
And she, unconscious what she said  
With feeble hands about her spread  
Sought it with yearnings infinite

## SCHOLAR AND CARPENTER

“With mother-longing still beguiled,  
And lost in fever-fancies wild,  
She piteously bemoaned her child

That we had stolen, she said, away  
And ten sad days she sighed to me,  
‘I cannot rest until I see  
My pretty one’ I think that he  
Smiled in my face but yesterday’

“Then she would change, and faintly try  
To sing some tender lullaby,  
And ‘Ah!’ would moan, ‘if I should die,  
Who, sweetest babe, would cherish thee?’

Then weep, ‘My pretty boy is grown,  
With tender feet on the cold stone  
He stands, for he can stand alone,  
And no one leads him motherly’

“Then she with dying movements slow  
Would seem to knit, or seem to sew  
‘His feet are bare, he must not go  
Unshod’ and as her death drew on,  
‘O little baby,’ she would sigh,  
‘My little child, I cannot die  
Till I have you to slumber nigh—  
You, you to set mine eyes upon’

“When she spake thus, and moaning lay,  
They said, ‘She cannot pass away,

## SCHOLAR AND CARPENTER

So sore she longs: and as the day  
Broke on the hills, I left her side  
Mourning along this lane I went  
Some travelling folk had pitched their tent  
Up yonder there a woman bent  
With age sat meanly canopied.

A twelvemonths child was at her side  
Whose infant may that be? I cried.  
His that will own him she replied  
His mother's dead no worse could be,  
Since you can give—or else I erred—  
See you are taken at your word  
Quoth I; that child is mine I heard  
And own him! Rise and give him me

• She rose amazed, but cursed me too  
She could not hold such luck for true  
But gave him soon with small ado.  
I laid him by my Lucy's side  
Close to her face that baby crept  
And stroked it and the sweet soul wept  
Then while upon her arm he slept  
She passed, for she was satisfied.

I loved her well I wept her sore  
And when her funeral left my door  
I thought that I should never more  
Feel any pleasure near me glow

## *SCHOLAR AND CARPENTER*

But I have learned, though this I had,  
'Tis sometimes natural to be glad,  
And no man can be always sad  
Unless he wills to have it so

“Oh, I had heavy nights at first,  
And daily wakening was the worst  
For then my grief arose, and burst  
Like something fresh upon my head,  
Yet when less keen it seemed to grow,  
I was not pleased—I wished to go  
Mourning adown this vale of woe,  
For all my life uncomforted

“I grudged myself the lightsome air,  
That makes man cheerful unaware,  
When comfort came, I did not care  
To take it in, to feel it stir  
And yet God took with me His plan,  
And now for my appointed span  
I think I am a happier man  
For having wed and wept for her

“Because no natural tie remains,  
On this small thing I spend my gains,  
God makes me love him for my pains,  
And binds me so to wholesome care  
I would not lose from my past life  
That happy year, that happy wife!

## SCHOLAR AND CARPENTER

Yet now I wage no useless strife  
With feelings blithe and debonair

I have the courage to be gay  
Although she lieth lapped away  
Under the daisies, for I say  
Thou wouldst be glad if thou couldst  
see  
My constant thought makes manifest  
I have not what I love the best  
But I must thank God for the rest  
While I hold heaven a verity "

He rose, upon his shoulder set  
The child, and while with vague regret  
We parted, pleased that we had met  
\* My heart did with herself confer  
With wholesome shame she did repent  
Her reasonings idly eloquent  
And said I might be more content:  
But God go with the carpenter "

## The Star's Monument

IN THE CONCLUDING PART  
OF A DISCOURSE ON FAME



### *He thinks*

It there be memory in the world to come,  
If thought recur to SOME THINGS  
silenced here,  
Then shall the deep heart be no longer  
dumb,  
But find expression in that happier  
sphere,  
It shall not be denied their utmost sum  
Of love, to speak without or fault or  
fear,  
But utter to the harp with changes sweet  
Words that, forbidden still, then heaven  
were incomplete

### *He speaks*

Now let us talk about the ancient days,  
And things which happened long before  
our birth



## THE STAR'S MONUMENT

It is a pity to lament that praise  
Should be no shadow in the train of  
worth.  
What is it Madam that your heart dis-  
may?  
Why murmur at the course of this vast  
earth?  
Think rather of the work than of the  
praise  
Come we will talk about the ancient  
days.

There was a Poet Madam once (said  
he)  
I will relate his story to you now  
While through the branches of this apple  
tree  
Some spots of sunshine flicker on your  
brow  
While every flower hath on its breast a  
bee  
And every bird in stirring doth endow  
The grass with falling blooms that  
smoothly glide,  
As ships drop down a river with the tide.

For telling of his tale no fitter place  
Than this old orchard sloping to the  
west

## *THE STAR'S MONUMENT*

Through its pink dome of blossom I can  
trace

Some overlying azure, for the rest,  
These flowery branches round us inter-  
lace,

The ground is hollowed like a mossy  
nest  
Who talks of fame while the religious  
spring  
Offers the incense of her blossoming?

There was a Poet, Madam, once (said  
he),

Who, while he walked at sundown in  
a lane,  
Took to his heart the hope that destiny  
Had singled him this guerdon to ob-  
tain,

That by the power of his sweet min-  
strelsy

Some hearts for truth and goodness he  
should gain,  
And charm some grovellers to uplift their  
eyes

And suddenly wax conscious of the skies

“Master, good e’en to ye!” a woodman  
said,

Who the low hedge was trimming with  
his shears

## THE STAR'S MONUMENT

This hour is fine"—the Poet bowed his head.

More fine " he thought, O friend! to me appears

The sunset than to you finer the spread  
Of orange lustre through these azure  
spheres,

Where little clouds lie still like flocks of  
sheep

Or vessels sailing in God's other deep.

O finer far! What work so high as  
mine,

Interpreter betwixt the world and man  
Nature's ungathered pearls to set and  
shrine,

\* The mystery she wraps her in to scan  
Her unsyllabic voices to combine

And serve her with such love as poets  
can

With mortal words, her chant of praise  
to bind,

Then die, and leave the poem to mankind?

O fair O fine, O lot to be desired!

Early and late my heart appeals to me  
And says O work O will—Thou man  
be fired,

To earn this lot —she says I would  
not be

## *THE STAR'S MONUMENT*

A worker for mine own bread, or one  
hired

For mine own profit O, I would be  
free

To work for others, love so earned of  
them

Should be my wages and my diadem

“ ‘Then when I died I should not fall,’  
says she,

‘Like dropping flowers that no man  
noticeth,

But like a great branch of some stately  
tree

Rent in a tempest, and flung down to  
death,

Thick with green leafage—so that pite-  
ously

Each passer by that ruin shuddereth,  
And saith, The gap this branch hath left  
is wide,

The loss thereof can never be supplied ’”

But, Madam, while the Poet pondered so,  
Toward the leafy hedge he turned his  
eye,

And saw two slender branches that did  
grow,

And from it rising spring and flourish  
high

## THE STAR'S MONUMENT

Their tops were twined together fast and  
lo

Their shadow crossed the path as he  
went by—

The shadow of a wild rose and a briar  
And it was shaped in semblance like a  
lyre.

In sooth a lyre! and as the soft air  
played

Those branches stirred but did not  
disunite.

O emblem meet for me! the Poet  
said

Ay I accept and own thee for my  
right

The shadowy lyre across my feet is laid  
Distinct though frail and clear with  
crimson light

Fast is it twined to bear the windy strain  
And, supple, it will bend and rise again.

This lyre is cast across the dusty way  
The common path that common men  
pursue

I crave like blessing for my shadowy lay  
Life's trodden paths with beauty to re-  
new

And cheer the eve of many a toil-stained  
day

## THE STAR'S MONUMENT

Light it, old sun, wet it, thou common  
dew,  
That 'neath men's feet its image still  
may be  
While yet it waves above them, living  
lyre, like thee !"

But even as the Poet spoke, behold  
He lifted up his face toward the sky,  
The ruddy sun dipt under the grey wold,  
His shadowy lyre was gone, and, pass-  
ing by,  
The woodman lifting up his shears, was  
bold  
Their temper on those branches twain  
to try,  
And all their loveliness and leafage sweet  
Fell in the pathway, at the Poet's feet

"Ah ! my fair emblem that I chose,"  
quoth he,

"That for myself I coveted but now,  
Too soon, methinks, thou hast been false  
to me,

The lyre from pathway fades, the light  
from brow "

Then straightway turned he from it  
hastily,

As dream that waking sense will dis-  
allow,

## THE STAR S MONUMENT

And while the highway heavenward paled  
    apace  
He went on westward to his dwelling  
    place.

He went on steadily while far and fast  
    The summer darkness dropped upon  
        the world,  
A gentle air among the cloudlets passed  
    And fanned away their crimson then  
        it curled  
The yellow poppies in the field and  
    cast  
    A dimness on the grasses, for it furl'd  
Their daisies and swept out the purple  
    stain  
That eve had left upon the pastoral plain

He reached his city   Lo! the darkened  
    street  
    Where he abode was full of gazing  
        crowds  
He heard the muffled tread of many  
    feet  
    A multitude stood gazing at the clouds.  
What mark ye there " said he   and  
    wherefore meet?  
Only a passing mist the heaven o'er  
    shrouds

## THE STAR'S MONUMENT

It breaks, it parts, it drifts like scattered  
spars—  
What lies behind it but the nightly  
stars ?”

Then did the gazing crowd to him  
aver

They sought a lump in heaven whose  
light was hid,  
For that in sooth an old Astronomer  
Down from his rook had rushed into  
their mid,

Frighted, and fain with others to confer,  
That he had cried, “O sirs!”—and  
upward bid

Them gaze—“O sirs, a light is quenched  
afar,

Look up, my masters, we have lost a  
star !”

The people pointed, and the Poet's eyes  
Flew upward, where a gleaming sister-  
hood

Swam in the dewy heaven The very  
skies

Were mutable, for all-amazed he stood  
To see that truly not in any wise

He could behold them as of old, nor  
could



## THE STAR'S MONUMENT

His eyes receive the whole whereof he  
wot,  
But when he told them over one was  
NOT

While yet he gazed and pondered reverently  
The fickle folk began to move away  
It is but one star less for us to see  
And what does one star signify?" quoth they  
The heavens are full of them." But  
ah!" said he,  
That star was bright while yet she  
lasted." Ay!"  
They answered praise her Poet an ye  
will  
Some are now shining that are brighter  
still."

Poor star! to be disparaged so soon  
On her withdrawal" thus the Poet  
sighed  
That men should miss and straight  
deny her noon  
Its brightness!" But the people in  
their pride  
Said How are we beholden? 'twas no  
boon

## *THE STAR'S MONUMENT*

She gave Her nature 'twas to shine  
so wide  
She could not choose but shine, nor could  
we know  
Such star had ever dwelt in heaven but  
so "

The Poet answered sadly, "That is  
true!"

And then he thought upon unthankful-  
ness,  
While some went homeward, and the  
residue,  
Reflecting that the stars are number-  
less,  
Mourned that man's daylight hours should  
be so few,  
So short the shining that his path may  
bless  
To nearer themes then tuned their will-  
ing lips,  
And thought no more upon the star's  
eclipse

But he, the Poet, could not rest content  
Till he had found that old Astronomer,  
Therefore at midnight to his house he  
went  
And prayed him be his tale's inter-  
preter

## THE STAR S MONUMENT

And yet upon the heaven his eyes he  
bent

Hearing the marvel yet he sought for  
her

That was awanting in the hope her face  
Once more might fill its reft abiding  
place.

Then said the old Astronomer My  
son

I sat alone upon my roof to-night

I saw the stars come forth and scarcely  
shun

To fringe the edges of the western  
light

I marked those ancient clusters one by  
one,

The same that blessed our old fore  
fathers sight

For God alone is older—none but He  
Can charge the stars with mutability

The elders of the night the steadfast  
stars

The old, old stars which God has let  
us see,

That they might be our souls auxiliars

And help us to the truth how young  
we be—

## THE STAR'S MONUMENT

God's youngest, latest born, as if, some  
spars

And a little clay being over of them—

He

Had made our world and us thereof,  
yet given,

To humble us, the sight of His great  
heaven

“But ah! my son, to-night mine eyes  
have seen

The death of light, the end of old re-  
nown,

A shrinking back of glory that had been,  
A dread eclipse before the Eternal's  
frown

How soon a little grass will grow  
between

These eyes and those appointed to look  
down

Upon a world that was not made on  
high

Till the last scenes of their long empire!

“To-night that shining cluster now de-  
spoiled

Lay in day's wake a perfect sister-  
hood,

## THE STAR S MONUMENT

Sweet was its light to me that long had  
toiled

It gleamed and trembled o'er the dis-  
tant wood

Blown in a pile the clouds from it re-  
colled,

Cool twilight up the sky her way made  
good

I saw but not believed—it was so strange—  
That one of those same stars had suffered  
change.

The darkness gathered, and methought  
she spread,

Wrapped in a reddish haze that waxed  
and waned

•But notwithstanding to myself I said—

The stars are changeless sure some  
*mote hath stained*

Mine eyes, and her fair glory minished.

Of age and failing vision I complained  
And thought some vapour in the heavens  
doth swim

That makes her look so large and yet so  
dim.

But I gazed round, and all her lustrous  
peers ,

In her red presence showed but wan  
and white



## *THE STAR'S MONUMENT*

Till night was at the darkest and on  
high  
Her sisters glittered though her light  
was spent  
I strained, to follow her each aching  
eye,  
So swiftly at her Maker's will she  
went  
I looked again—I looked—the star was  
gone,  
And nothing marked in heaven where  
she had shone."

Gone!" said the Poet, and about to  
be

Forgotten O how sad a fate is hers!"  
How is it sad my son? all reverently  
The old man answered though she  
ministers

No longer with her lamp to me and  
thee

She has fulfilled her mission. God  
transfers

Or dims her ray yet was she blest as  
bright

For all her life was spent in giving light.

Her mission she fulfilled assuredly "

The Poet cried but O unhappy star!

## *THE STAR'S MONUMENT*

None praise and few will bear in  
memory

The name she went by O, from far,  
from far

Comes down, methinks, her mournful  
voice to me

Full of regrets that men so thankless  
are "

So said, he told that old Astronomer  
All that the gazing crowd had said of  
her

And he went on to speak in bitter wise,  
As one who seems to tell another's  
fate,

But feels that nearer meaning underlies,  
And points its sadness to his own  
estate

"If such be the reward," he said with  
sighs,

"Envy to earn for love, for goodness  
hate—

It such be thy reward, hard case is thine!  
It had been better for thee not to shine

"If to reflect a light that is divine  
Makes that which doth reflect it better  
seen,

And if to see is to condemn the shrine,  
'Twere surely better it had never been



## THE STAR'S MONUMENT

It had been better for her NOT TO SHINE,  
And for me NOT TO SING. Better I ween  
For us to yield no more that radiance  
bright  
For them, to lack the light than scorn  
the light."

Strange words were those from Poet lips  
(said he)

And then he paused, and sighed, and  
turned to look

Upon the lady's downcast eyes, and see  
How fast the honey bees in settling  
shook

Those apple blossoms on her from the  
tree

• He watched her busy fingers as they  
took

And slipped the knotted thread and  
thought how much

He would have given that hand to hold  
—to touch.

At length, as suddenly become aware

Of this long pause she lifted up her  
face,

And he withdrew his eyes—she looked so  
fair

And cold he thought, in her uncon-  
scious grace.

## THE STAR'S MONUMENT

“Ah' little dreams she of the restless  
care,”

He thought, “that makes my heart to  
throb apace

Though we this morning part, the know-  
ledge sends

No thrill to her calm pulse—we are but  
FRIENDS ”

Ah' turret clock (he thought), I would  
thy hand

Were hid behind yon towering maple-  
trees'

Ah' tell-tale shadow, but one moment  
stand—

Dark shadow—fast advancing to my  
knees,

Ah' foolish heart (he thought), that vainly  
planned

By feigning gladness to arrive at ease,

Ah' painful hour, yet pain to think it  
ends,

I must remember that we are but friends

And while the knotted thread moved to  
and fro,

In sweet regretful tones that lady said

‘It seemeth that the fame you would  
forgo

• The Poet whom you tell of coveted,

## THE STAR'S MONUMENT

But I would fain methinks, his story  
know

And was he loved?" said she, or was  
he wed?

And had he friends?" One friend, per  
haps," said he,

But for the rest, I pray you let it be."

Ah! little bird (he thought) most patient  
bird

Breasting thy speckled eggs the long  
day through

By so much as my reason is preferred

Above thine instinct, I my work would  
do

Better than thou dost thine. Thou hast  
• not stirred

This hour thy wing Ah! russet bird,  
I sue

For a like patience to wear through these  
hours—

Bird on thy nest among the apple flowers.

I will not speak—I will not speak to  
thee,

My star! and soon to be my lost, lost  
star

The sweetest, first that ever shone on me  
So high above me and beyond so far

## THE STAR'S MONUMENT

I can forgo thee, but not bear to see  
My love, like rising mist, thy lustre  
mar  
That were a base return for thy sweet  
light  
Shine, though I never more shall see  
that thou art bright

Never! 'Tis certain that no hope is—  
none!  
No hope for me, and yet for thee no  
fear  
The hardest part of my hard task is done,  
Thy calm assures me that I am not  
dear,  
Though far and fast the rapid moments  
run,  
Thy bosom heaveth not, thine eyes are  
clear,  
Silent, perhaps a little sad at heart  
She is I am her friend, and I depart

Silent she had been, but she raised her  
face,  
“And will you end,” said she, “this  
half-told tale?”  
“Yes, it were best,” he answered her  
“The place  
Where I left off was where he felt to  
fail

## THE STAR'S MONUMENT

His courage Madam through the fancy  
base

That they who love, endure or work  
may rail

And cease—if all their love, the works  
they wrought,

And their endurance, men have set at  
nought.

It had been better for me NOT to sing  
My Poet said, and for her NOT to  
shine

But him the old man answered sorrowing  
My son, did God who made her the  
Divine

Lighter of suns, when down to you bright  
• ring

He cast her like some gleaming alman-  
dine,

And set her in her place, begirt with rays,  
Say unto her Give light, or say Earn  
praise ?

The Poet said, He made her to give  
light.

My son the old man answered  
blest are such

A blessed lot, is theirs but if each night  
Mankind had praised her radiance—in  
as much

## THE STAR'S MONUMENT

As praise had never made it wax more  
bright,

And cannot now rekindle with its touch  
Her lost effulgence, it is nought I wot  
That praise was not her blessing nor her  
lot'

“ ‘Ay,’ said the Poet, ‘I my words abjure,  
And I repent me that I uttered them,  
But by her light and by its forfeiture

She shall not pass without her requiem  
Though my name perish, yet shall hers  
endure

Though I should be forgotten, she, lost  
gem,  
Shall be remembered, though she sought  
not fame,  
It shall be busy with her beauteous name

“ ‘For I will raise in her bright memory,  
Lost now on earth, a lasting monu-  
ment,

And graven on it shall recorded be  
That all her rays to light mankind  
were spent,

And I will sing albeit none heedeth me,  
On her exemplar being still intent  
While in men’s sight shall stand the re-  
cord thus—

‘So long as she did last she lighted us’

## THE STAR S MONUMENT

So said he raised according to his vow  
On the green grass, where oft his  
townsfolk met,  
Under the shadow of a leafy bough  
That leaned toward a singing rivulet,  
One pure white stone whereon, like  
crown on brow  
The image of the vanished star was  
set  
And this was graven on the pure white  
stone  
In golden letters— WHILE SHE LIVED SHE  
SHONE

Madam I cannot give this story well—  
My heart is beating to another chime;  
My voice must needs a different cadence  
swell  
It is you singing bird, which all the  
time  
Wooeth his nested mate, that doth dispel  
My thoughts. What, deem you could  
a lover's rhyme  
The sweetness of that passionate lay  
excel?"  
O soft, O low her voice— I cannot tell."

## THE STAR'S MONUMENT

### *He thinks*

The old man—aye he spoke, he was not  
hard,

“She was his joy,” he said, “his comfort-  
forter,

But he would trust me I was not de-  
barred

Whate’er my heart approved to say to  
her”

Approved! O torn and tempted and ill-  
starred

And breaking heart, approve not nor  
demur,

It is the serpent that beguileth thee

With “God doth know” beneath this  
apple tree

Yet, God doth know, and only God doth  
know

Have pity, God, my spirit groans to  
Thee!

I bear thy curse primeval, and I go,

But heavier than on Adam falls on  
me

My tillage of the wilderness, for lo,

I leave behind the woman, and I see

As ’t were the gates of Eden closing o’er  
To hide her from my sight for evermore



## THE STAR'S MONUMENT

4

### *He speaks*

I am a fool with sudden start he cried  
To let the song-bird work me such unrest

If I break off again I pray you chide  
For morning fleeteth with my tale at best

Half told. That white stone Madam  
gleamed beside

The little rivulet and all men pressed  
To read the lost one's story traced thereon  
The golden legend— While she lived she  
shone "

And Madam, when the Poet heard them  
• read,

And children spell the letters softly  
through

It may be that he felt at heart some  
need

Some craving to be thus remembered  
too;

It may be that he wondered if indeed

He must die wholly when he passed  
from view

It may be, wished when death his eyes  
made dim,

That some kind hand would raise such  
stone for him

## *THE STAR'S MONUMENT*

But shortly, as there comes to most of  
us,

There came to him the need to quit  
his home

To tell you why were simply hazardous

What said I, Madam?—men were made  
to roam

My meaning is It hath been always  
thus

They are athirst for mountains and sea  
foam,

Hens of this world, what wonder if per-  
chance

They long to see their grand inheritance?

He left his city, and went forth to teach,

Mankind, his peers, the hidden harmony

That underlies God's discords, and to  
reach

And touch the master-string that like a  
sigh

Thrills in their souls, as if it would be-  
sech

Some hand to sound it, and to satisfy

Its yearning for expression but no word

Till poet touch it hath to make its music  
heard

## THE STAR'S MONUMENT

•

### *He thinks*

I know that God is good, though evil  
dwells  
Among us, and doth all things holiest  
share  
That there is joy in heaven, while yet our  
knells  
Sound for the souls which He has sum-  
moned there  
That painful love unsatisfied hath spells  
Earned by its smart to soothe its fel-  
low's care  
But yet this atom cannot in the whole  
Forget itself—it aches a separate soul.

### *He speaks*

• But, Madam to my Poet I return  
With his sweet cadences of woven  
words,  
He made their rude untutored hearts to  
burn  
And melt like gold refined. No brood-  
ing birds  
Sing better of the love that doth sojourn  
Hid in the nest of home, which softly  
girds  
The beating heart of life and strait  
though it be,  
Is straitness better than wide liberty

## *THE STAR'S MONUMENT*

He taught them, and they learned, but  
not the less

Remained unconscious whence that lore  
they drew,

But dreamed that of their native nobleness  
Some lofty thoughts that he had  
planted, grew,

His glorious maxims in a lowly dress  
Like seed sown broadcast sprung in all  
men's view,

The sower, passing onward, was not  
known,

And all men reaped the harvest as their own

It may be, Madam, that those ballads  
sweet,

Whose rhythmic measures yesterday we  
sung,

Which time and changes make not obso-  
lete,

But (as a river bears down blossoms  
flung

Upon its breast) take with them while  
they fleet—

It may be from his lyre that first they  
sprung,

But who can tell, since work surviveth  
fame?—

The rhyme is left, but lost the Poet's  
name

## THE STAR'S MONUMENT

He worked, and bravely he fulfilled his trust—

So long he wandered sowing worthy seed,

Watering of wayside buds that were adust,  
And touching for the common ear his reed—

So long to wear away the cankerling rust  
That dulls the gold of life—so long to plead

With sweetest music for all souls oppressed

That he was old ere he had thought of rest.

Old and grey-headed, leaning on a staff

To that great city of his birth he came,  
And at its gates he paused with wondering laugh

To think how changed were all his thoughts of fame

Since first he carved the golden epitaph

To keep in memory a worthy name,  
And thought forgetfulness had been its doom

But for a few bright letters on a tomb.

The old Astronomer had long since died

The friends of youth were gone and far dispersed

## *THE STAR'S MONUMENT*

Strange were the domes that rose on  
every side,  
Strange fountains on his wondering  
vision burst,  
The men of yesterday their business plied,  
No face was left that he had known at  
first,  
And in the city gardens, lo, he sees  
The saplings that he set are stately trees  
Upon the grass beneath their welcome  
shade,  
Behold' he marks the fair white monu-  
ment,  
And on its face the golden words dis-  
played,  
For sixty years their lustre have not  
spent,  
He sitteth by it and is not afraid,  
But in its shadow he is well content,  
And envies not, though bright their gleam-  
ings are,  
The golden letters of the vanished star  
  
He gazeth up, exceeding bright appears  
That golden legend to his aged eyes,  
For they are dazzled till they fill with  
tears,  
And his lost Youth doth like a vision  
rise,

## THE STAR'S MONUMENT

She saith to him, In all these toilsome  
years,  
What hast thou won by work or enter-  
prise?  
What hast thou won to make amends to  
thee,  
As thou didst swear to do for loss of me?

O man! O white-haired man!" the  
vision said,  
Since we two sat beside this monu-  
ment  
Life's clearest hues are all vanished,  
The golden wealth thou hadst of me is  
spent  
The wind hath swept thy flowers their  
leaves are shed  
The music is played out that with thee  
went."  
Peace, peace!" he cried I lost thee  
but, in truth,  
There are worse losses than the loss of  
youth "

He said not what those losses were—  
but I—  
But I must leave them, for the time  
draws near  
Some lose not ONLY joy but memory  
Of how it felt not love that was so dear

## THE STAR'S MONUMENT

Lose only, but the steadfast certainty  
That once they had it, doubt comes on,  
then fear,  
And after that despondency I wis  
The Poet must have meant such loss as  
this

But while he sat and pondered on his  
youth,  
He said, "It did one deed that doth  
remain,  
For it preserved the memory and the truth  
Of her that now doth neither set nor  
wane,  
But shine in all men's thoughts, nor sink  
forsooth,  
And be forgotten like the summer rain.  
O, it is good that man should not for-  
get  
Or benefits foregone or brightness set!"

He spoke and said, "My lot contenteth  
me,  
I am right glad for this her worthy  
fame,  
That which was good and great I fain  
would see  
Drawn with a halo round what rests—  
its name"



## THE STAR S MONUMENT

This while the Poet said behold there  
came

A workman with his tools anear the tree,  
And when he read the words he paused  
awhile

And pondered on them with a wondering  
smile,

And then he said, I pray you Sir what  
mean

The golden letters of this monument?"  
I wonder quoth the Poet, Hast thou been  
A dweller near at hand, and their intent  
Hast neither heard by voice of fame nor  
seen

The marble earlier?" Ay " said he  
and leant

Upon his spade to hear the tale then sigh  
And say it was a marvel, and pass by

Then said the Poet, This is strange to  
me."

But as he mused with trouble in his  
mind,

A band of maids approached him leisurely  
Like vessels sailing with a favouring  
wind

And of their rosy lips requested he,

As one that for a doubt would solving  
find,

## THE STAR'S MONUMENT

The tale, if tale there were, of that white  
stone,  
And those fair letters—"While she lived  
she shone"

Then like a fleet that floats becalmed  
they stay  
"O, Sir," saith one, "this monument  
is old,  
But we have heard our virtuous mothers say  
That by their mothers thus the tale  
was told  
A Poet made it, journeying then away,  
He left us, and though some the mean-  
ing hold  
For other than the ancient one, yet we  
Receive this legend for a certainty —

"There was a lily once, most purely white,  
Beneath the shadow of these boughs it  
grew,  
Its starry blossom it unclosed by night,  
And a young Poet loved its shape and  
hue  
He watched it nightly, 'twas so fair a  
sight,  
Until a stormy wind arose and blew,  
And when he came once more his flower  
to greet,  
Its fallen petals drifted to his feet

## THE STAR'S MONUMENT

And for his beautiful white lily's sake  
That she might be remembered where  
her scent  
Had been right sweet he said that he  
would make  
In her dear memory a monument  
For she was purer than a driven flake  
Of snow and in her grace most excel-  
lent  
The loveliest life that death did ever mar  
As beautiful to gaze on as a star "

I thank you maid " the Poet answered  
her  
And I am glad that I have heard  
your tale."  
With that they passed and as an inlander  
Having heard breakers raging in a gale  
And falling down in thunder will aver  
That still when far away in grassy  
vale,  
He seems to hear those seething waters  
bound  
So in his ears the maiden's voice did  
sound.

He leaned his face upon his hand and  
thought  
And thought until a youth came by  
that way

## *THE STAR'S MONUMENT*

And once again of him the Poet sought  
The story of the star. But, well-a-day!  
He said, "The meaning with much doubt  
is fraught,  
The sense thereof can no man surely  
say,  
For still tradition sways the common ear,  
That of a truth a star DID DISAPPEAR

"But they who look beneath the outer  
shell  
That wraps the 'kernel of the people's  
lore',  
Hold true for superstition, and they tell  
That seven lovely sisters dwelt of yore  
In this old city, where it so befell  
That one a Poet loved, that, further-  
more,  
As stars above us she was pure and good,  
And fairest of that beauteous sisterhood.

"So beautiful they were, those virgins  
seven,  
That all men called them clustered  
stars in song,  
Forgetful that the stars abide in heaven  
But woman bideth not beneath it long,  
For O, alas! alas! one fated even,  
When stars their azure deeps began to  
throng,

## THE STAR'S MONUMENT

That virgin's eyes of Poet loved waxed  
dim,  
And all their lustrous shining waned to  
him,

In summer dusk she drooped her head  
and sighed  
Until what time the evening star went  
down,  
And all the other stars did shining bide  
Clear in the lustre of their old renown  
And then—the virgin laid her down and  
died  
Forgot her youth forgot her beauty's  
crown,  
Forgot the sisters whom she loved before  
And broke her Poet's heart for evermore."

A mournful tale in sooth," the lady  
saith  
But did he truly grieve for evermore?"  
It may be you forget," he answereth  
That this is but a fable at the core  
O the other fable." Though it be but  
breath "  
She asketh was it true?" Then he  
This lore,  
Since it is fable, either way may go  
Then if it please you think it might be  
so."

## *THE STAR'S MONUMENT*

“Nay, but,” she saith, “if I had told  
your tale,

The virgin should have lived his home  
to bless,

Or, must she die, I would have made to  
fail

His useless love ” “I tell you not the  
less,”

He sighs, “because it was of no avail

His heart the Poet would not dispossess  
Thereof But let us leave the fable now  
My Poet heard it with an aching brow

“And he made answer thus ‘I thank  
thee, youth,

Strange is thy story to these aged ears,  
But I bethink me thou hast told a truth”

Under the guise of fable If my tears,  
Thou lost beloved star, lost now, forsooth,  
Indeed could bring thee back among  
thy peers,

So new thou shouldst be deemed as newly  
seen,

For men forget that thou hast ever been

“ ‘There was a morning when I longed for  
fame,

There was a noontide when I passed it  
by,

## THE STAR'S MONUMENT

There is an evening when I think not  
shame

Its substance and its being to deny  
For if men bear in mind great deeds the  
name

Of him that wrought them shall they  
leave to die

Or if his name they shall have deathless  
writ,

They change the deeds that first ennobled it.

O golden letters of this monument!

O words to celebrate a loved renown  
Lost now or wrested! and to fancies lent

Or on a fabled forehead set for crown  
For my departed star I am content,

Though legends dim and years her  
memory drown

For what were fame to her compared  
and set

By this great truth which ye make lus-  
trous yet?

Adieu! the Poet said my vanished  
star

Thy duty and thy happiness were one.  
Work is heaven's best its fame is sub-  
lunar

The fame thou dost not need—the work  
is done.

## THE STAR'S MONUMENT

For thee I am content that these things  
are,  
More than content were I, my race  
being run,  
Might it be true of me, though none  
thereon  
Should muse regretful—While he lived  
he shone '

"So said, the Poet rose and went his way,  
And that same lot he proved whereof  
he spake  
Madam, my story is told out, the day  
Draws out her shadows, time doth over-  
take  
The morning That which endeth call a  
lay,  
Sung after pause—a motto in the break  
Between two chapters of a tale not new,  
Nor joyful—but a common tale Adieu'

"And that same God who made your  
face so fair,  
And gave your woman's heart its ten-  
derness,  
So shield the blessing He implanted there,  
That it may never turn to your distress,  
And never cost you trouble or despair,  
Nor granted leave the granter comfort-  
less,



## THE STAR'S MONUMENT

But like a river blest where'er it flows,  
Be still receiving while it still bestows.

Adieu " he said, and paused while she  
sat mute

In the soft shadow of the apple-tree  
The skylark's song rang like a joyous  
flute,

The brook went prattling past her rest  
lessly

She let their tongues be her tongue's  
substitute

It was the wind that sighed It was  
not she

And what the lark, the brook, the wind,  
had said,

"We cannot tell, for none interpreted.

Their counsels might be hard to reconcile

They might not suit the moment or  
the spot.

She rose, and laid her work aside the  
while

Down in the sunshine of that grassy  
plot

She looked upon him with an almost  
smile

And held to him a hand that faltered  
not.

## THE STAR'S MONUMENT

One moment—bird and brook went warbling on,  
And the wind sighed again—and he was gone

So quietly, as if she heard no more  
Or skylark in the azure overhead,  
Or water slipping past the cressy shore,  
Or wind that rose in sighs, and sighing fled—

So quietly, until the alders hoar  
Took him beneath them, till the downward spread  
Of planes engulfed him in their leafy seas—

She stood beneath her rose-flushed apple-trees

And then she stooped toward the mossy grass,  
And gathered up her work and went her way,

Straight to that ancient turret she did pass,

And startle back some fawns that were at play

She did not sigh, she never said "Alas!"  
Although he was her friend but still that day,

## THE STAR S MONUMENT

Where elm and hornbeam spread a tower  
ing dome  
She crossed the dells to her ancestral  
home.

And did she love him?—what if she did  
not?

Then home was still the home of hap-  
piest years  
Nor thought was exiled to partake his lot  
Nor heart lost courage through fore  
boding fears  
Nor echo did against her secret plot,  
Nor music her betray to painful tears  
Nor life become a dream, and sunshine dim  
And riches poverty because of him.

But did she love him?—what and if she  
did?

Love cannot cool the burning Austral  
sand  
Nor show the secret waters that lie hid  
In arid valleys of that desert land.  
Love has no spells can scorching winds  
forbid,  
Or bring the help which tames near  
to hand,  
Or spread a cloud for curtaining faded  
eyes  
That gaze up dying into alien skies.

## A Dead Year



I took a year out of my life and story—  
A dead year, and said, "I will hew  
thee a tomb'

'All the kings of the nations lie in glory,'  
Cased in cedar, and shut in a sacred  
gloom,  
Swathed in linen, and precious unguents  
old,  
Painted with cinnabar, and rich with gold

"Silent they rest, in solemn salvatory,  
Sealed from the moth and the owl and  
the flittermouse—

Each with his name on his brow  
'All the kings of the nations lie in  
glory,  
Every one in his own house'  
Then why not thou?

"Year," I said, "thou shalt not lack  
Bribes to bar thy coming back,  
Doth old Egypt wear her best  
In the chambers of her rest?

## A DEAD YEAR

Doth she take to her last bed  
Beaten gold, and glorious red?  
Envy not! for thou wilt wear  
In the dark a shroud as fair  
Golden with the sunny ray  
Thou withdrawest from my day  
Wrought upon with colours fine  
Stolen from this life of mine  
Like the dusty Libyan kings,  
Lie with two wide-open wings  
On thy breast as if to say  
On these wings hope flew away  
And so housed and thus adorned,  
Not forgotten but not scorned  
Let the dark for evermore  
Close thee when I close the door  
And the dust for ages fall  
In the creases of thy pall  
And no voice nor visit rude  
Break thy sealed solitude."

I took the year out of my life and story  
The dead year and said, I have hewed  
thee a tomb!

All the kings of the nations lie in glory  
Cased in cedar and shut in a sacred  
gloom;  
But for the sword, and the sceptre and  
diadem

Sure thou didst reign like them "

## *A DEAD YEAR*

So I laid her with those tyrants old and  
hoary,

According to my vow ,  
For I said, "The kings of the nations  
lie in glory,  
And so shalt thou!"

"Rock," I said, "thy ribs are strong,  
That I bring thee guard it long,  
Hide the light from buried eyes —  
Hide it, lest the dead arise "

"Year," I said, and turned away,  
"I am free of thee this day ,  
All that we two only know,  
I forgive and I forgo,  
So thy face no more I meet  
In the field or in the street "

Thus we parted, she and I,  
Life hid death, and put it by,  
Life hid death, and said, "Be free'  
I have no more need of thee "  
No more need' O mad mistake,  
With repentance in its wake'  
Ignorant, and rash, and blind,  
Life had left the grave behind,  
But had locked within its hold  
With the spices and the gold,  
All she had to keep her warm  
In the raging of the storm

## A DEAD YEAR

Scarce the sunset bloom was gone,  
And the little stars outshone,  
Ere the dead year stiff and stark,  
Drew me to her in the dark  
Death drew life to come to her  
Beating at her sepulchre,  
Crying out, How can I part  
With the best share of my heart?  
Lo it lies upon the bier  
Captive with the buried year  
O my heart!" And I fell prone  
Weeping at the sealed stone

Year among the shades " I said  
Since I live, and thou art dead  
Let my captive heart be free  
Like a bird to fly to me "  
And I stayed some voice to win  
But none answered from within  
And I kissed the door—and night  
Deepened till the stars waxed bright  
And I saw them set and wane,  
And the world turned green again.

So " I whispered, open door  
I must tread this palace floor—  
Sealed palace rich and dim,  
Let a narrow sunbeam swim  
After me and on me spread  
While I look upon my dead

## *A DEAD YEAR*

Let a little warmth be free  
To come after, let me see  
Through the doorway, when I sit  
Looking out, the swallows flit,  
Settling not till daylight goes,  
Let me smell the wild white rose,  
Smell the woodbine and the may,  
Mark, upon a sunny day,  
Sated from their blossoms rise  
Honey-bees and butterflies  
Let me hear, O! let me hear,  
Sitting by my buried year,  
Finches chirping to their young,  
And the little noises flung  
Out of clefts where rabbits play,  
Or from falling water-spray,  
And the gracious echoes woke  
By man's work the woodman's  
stroke,  
Shout of shepherd, whistlings  
blithe,  
And the whetting of the scythe,  
Let this be, lest, shut and furled  
From the well-belovèd world,  
I forget her yearnings old,  
And her troubles manifold,  
Strivings sore, submissions meet,  
And my pulse no longer beat,  
Keeping time and bearing part  
With the pulse of her great heart



## A DEAD YEAR

So! swing open door and shade  
Take me I am not afraid,  
For the time will not be long  
Soon I shall have waxen strong—  
Strong enough my own to win  
From the grave it lies within."

And I entered. On her bier  
Quiet lay the buried year  
I sat down where I could see  
Life without and sunshine free,  
Death within. And I between  
Waited my own heart to wean  
From the shroud that shaded her  
In the rock-hewn sepulchre—  
Waited till the dead should say  
Heart, be free of me this day —  
Waited with a patient will—  
AND I WAIT BETWEEN THEM STILL.

I take the year back to my life and story  
The dead year and say I will share in  
thy tomb.

All the kings of the nations lie in  
glory  
Cased in cedar and shut in a sacred  
gloom!  
They reigned, in their lifetime with sceptre  
and diadem,

But thou excellest them

## *A DEAD YEAR*

For life doth make thy grave her oratory,  
And the crown is still on thy brow,  
'All the kings of the nations lie in glory',  
And so dost thou "

## Reflections

WRITTEN FOR "THE  
PORTFOLIO SOCIETY"  
JULY 8th



### *Looking over a Gate at a Pool in a Field*

What change has made the pastures sweet  
And reached the daisies at my feet

And cloud that wears a golden hem?  
This lovely world, the hills, the sward—  
They all look fresh as if our Lord  
But yesterday had finished them

And here is the field with light aglow  
How fresh its boundary lime-trees show

And how its wet leaves trembling shine!  
Between their trunks come through to me  
The morning sparkles of the sea  
Below the level browsing line.

I see the pool more clear by half  
Than pools where other waters laugh  
Up at the breasts of coot and rail.

## REFLECTIONS

There, as she passed it on her way,  
I saw reflected yesterday

A maiden with a milking-pail

There, neither slowly nor in haste,  
One hand upon her slender waist,

The other lifted to her pail,  
She rosy in the morning light,  
Among the water-daisies white,  
Like some fair sloop appeared to sail

Against her ankles as she trod,  
The lucky buttercups did nod

I leaned upon the gate to see  
The sweet thing looked, but did not speak,  
A dimple came in either cheek,  
And all my heart was gone from me

Then, as I lingered on the gate,  
And she came up like coming fate,

I saw my picture in her eyes—  
Clear dancing eyes, more black than sloes,  
Cheeks like the mountain pink, that grows  
Among white-headed majesties

I said, "A tale was made of old  
That I would fain to thee unfold,

Ah! let me—let me tell the tale "  
But high she held her comely head,  
"I cannot heed it now," she said,  
"For carrying of the milking-pail "

## REFLECTIONS

She laughed. What good to make ado?  
I held the gate, and she came through  
And took her homeward path anon  
From the clear pool her face had fled  
It rested on my heart instead  
Reflected when the maid was gone.

With happy youth and work content  
So sweet and stately on she went  
Right careless of the untold tale  
Each step she took I loved her more  
And followed to her dairy door  
The maiden with the milking-pail.

### II

For hearts where wakened love doth lurk  
How fine how blest a thing is work!  
For work does good when reasons fail—  
Good yet the axe at every stroke  
The echo of a name awoke—  
Her name is Mary Martindale.

I'm glad that echo was not heard  
Aright by other men a bird  
Knows doubtless what his own notes tell  
And I know not but I can say  
I felt as shamefaced all that day  
As if folks heard her name right well.

## REFLECTIONS

And when the west began to glow  
I went—I could not choose but go—  
    To that same dairy on the hill,  
And while sweet Mary moved about  
Within, I came to her without,  
    And leaned upon the window-sill

The garden border where I stood  
Was sweet with pinks and southernwood  
    I spoke—her answer seemed to fail  
I smelt the pinks—I could not see,  
The dusk came down and sheltered me,  
    And in the dusk she heard my tale

And what is left that I should tell?  
I begged a kiss, I pleaded well  
    The rosebud lips did long decline,  
But yet I think, I think 'tis true,  
That, leaned at last into the dew,  
    One little instant they were mine

O life! how dear thou hast become  
She laughed at dawn, and I was dumb,  
    But evening counsels best prevail  
Fair shine the blue that o'er her spreads,  
Green be the pastures where she treads,  
    The maiden with the milking-pail!

## The Letter L

### ABSENT

We sat on grassy slopes that meet  
With sudden dip the level strand  
The trees hung overhead—our feet  
Were on the sand.

Two silent girls, a thoughtful man,  
We sunned ourselves in open light  
And felt such April airs as fan  
The Isle of Wight

And smelt the wallflower in the crag  
Whereon that dainty waft had fed,  
Which made the bell-hung cowslip wag  
Her delicate head

And let alighting jackdaws fleet  
Adown it open-winged and pass  
Till they could touch with outstretched feet  
The warmed grass.

## THE LETTER L

The happy wave ran up and rang  
Like service bells a long way off,  
And down a little freshet sprang  
From mossy trough,

And splashed into a rain of spray,  
And fretted on with daylight's loss,  
Because so many blue-bells lay  
Leaning across

Blue martins gossiped in the sun,  
And pairs of chattering daws flew by,  
And sailing brigs rocked softly on  
In company

Wild cherry boughs above us spread  
The whitest shade was ever seen,  
And flicker, flicker, came and fled  
Sun spots between

Bees murmured in the milk-white bloom  
As babes will sigh for deep content  
When their sweet hearts for peace make  
room,  
As given, not lent

And we saw on we said no word,  
And one was lost in muskings rare,  
One buoyant as the waft that stirred  
Her shining hair



## THE LETTER L

His eyes were bent upon the sand  
Unfathomed deeps within them lay  
A slender rod was in his hand—  
A hazel spray

Her eyes were resting on his face,  
As shyly glad, by stealth to glean  
Impressions of his manly grace  
And guarded men

The mouth with steady sweetness set  
And eyes conveying unaware  
The distant hint of some regret  
That harboured there.

He gazed, and in the tender flush  
That made her face like roses blown  
And in the radiance and the hush  
Her thought was shown.

It was a happy thing to sit  
So near nor mar his reverie  
He looked not for a part in it,  
So meek was she.

But it was solace for her eyes  
And for her heart that yearned to him  
To watch apart in loving wise  
Those musings dim.

## *THE LETTER L*

Lost—lost, and gone! The Pelham woods  
Were full of doves that cooed at ease,  
The orchis filled her purple hoods  
For dainty bees

He heard not, all the delicate air  
Was fresh with falling water-spray  
It mattered not—he was not there,  
But far away

Till with the hazel in his hand,  
Still drowned in thought, it thus befell,  
He drew a letter on the sand—  
The letter L

And looking on it, straight there wrought  
A ruddy flush about his brow,  
His letter woke him absent thought  
Rushed homeward now

And half-abashed, his hasty touch  
Effaced it with a tell-tale care,  
As if his action had been much,  
And not his air

And she? she watched his open palm  
Smooth out the letter from the sand,  
And rose, with aspect almost calm,  
And filled her hand

## THE LETTER L

With cherry bloom and moved away  
To gather wild forget-me-not  
And let her errant footsteps stray  
To one sweet spot.

As if she coveted the fair  
White lining of the silver weed  
And cuckoo-pint that shaded there  
Empurpled seed.

She had not feared, as I divine,  
Because she had not hoped. Alas!  
The sorrow of it! for that sign  
Came but to pass

And yet it robbed her of the right  
To give who looked not to receive,  
And made her blush in love's despite  
That she should grieve.

A shape in white she turned to gaze  
Her eyes were shaded with her hand  
And half way up the winding ways  
We saw her stand.

Green hollows of the fringed cliff  
Red rocks that under waters show  
Blue roaches and a sailing skiff  
Were spread below

## THE LETTER L

She stood to gaze, perhaps to sigh,  
Perhaps to think, but who can tell,  
How heavy on her heart must lie  
The letter L'

---

She came anon with quiet grace,  
And "What," she murmured, "silent  
yet!"  
He answered, "'Tis a haunted place,  
And spell-beset

"O speak to us, and break the spell!"  
"The spell is broken," she replied  
"I crossed the running brook, it fell,  
It could not bide

"And I have brought a budding world,  
Of orchis spires and daisies rank,  
And ferny plumes but half uncurled,  
From yonder bank,

"And I shall weave of them a crown,  
And at the well-head launch it free,  
That so the brook may float it down,  
And out to sea

"There may it to some English hands  
From fairy meadow seem to come,  
The fairiest of fairy lands—  
The land of home "

## THE LETTER L

Weave on," he said and as she wove  
We told how currents in the deep  
With branches from a lemon grove  
Blue bergs will sweep.

And messages from shipwrecked folk  
Will navigate the moon-led main  
And painted boards of splintered oak  
Their port regain.

Then floated out by vagrant thought,  
My soul beheld on torrid sand  
The wasteful water set at nought  
Man's skilful hand

And suck out gold-dust from the box,  
And wash it down in weedy whirls,  
And split the wine-keg on the rocks,  
And lose the pearls.

Ah! why to that which needs it not "  
Methought, should costly things be  
given?  
How much is wasted, wrecked forgot  
On this side heaven!"

So musing did mine ears awake  
To maiden tones of sweet reserve  
And manly speech that seemed to make  
The steady curve

## THE LETTER L

Of lips that uttered it defer

    Their guard, and soften for the thought  
She listened, and his talk with her  
    Was fancy fraught

“There is not much in liberty”—

    With doubtful pauses he began,  
And said to her and said to me,  
    “There was a man—

“There was a man who dreamed one night

    That his dead father came to him,  
And said, when fire was low, and light  
    Was burning dim—

“ ‘Why vagrant thus, my sometime pride,  
Unloved, unloving, wilt thou roam?’  
Sure home is best!’ The son replied,  
    ‘I have no home’

“ ‘Shall not I speak?’ his father said,  
    ‘Who early chose a youthful wife,  
And worked for her, and with her led  
    My happy life

“ ‘Ay, I will speak, for I was young  
    As thou art now, when I did hold  
The prattling sweetness of thy tongue  
    Dearer than gold,

## THE LETTER L

And rosy from thy noonday sleep  
Would bear thee to admiring kin  
And all thy pretty looks would keep  
My heart within.

Then after mid thy young allies—  
For thee ambition flushed my brow—  
I coveted the schoolboy prize  
Far more than thou.

I thought for thee I thought for all  
My gamesome imps that round me grew  
The dews of blessing heaviest fall  
Where care falls too.

And I that sent my boys away  
In youthful strength to earn their bread  
And died before the hair was grey  
Upon my head—

I say to thee, though free from care  
A lonely lot, an aimless life,  
The crowning comfort is not there—  
Son, take a wife.

Father beloved, the son replied  
And failed to gather to his breast  
With arms in darkness searching wide  
The formless guest.

## THE LETTER L

“ ‘I am but free, as sorrow is,  
To dry her tears, to laugh, to talk,  
And free, as sick men are, I wis  
To rise and walk

“ ‘And free, as poor men are, to buy,  
If they have nought wherewith to pay,  
Nor hope, the debt before they die,  
To wipe away

“ ‘What ’vails it there are wives to win,  
And faithful hearts for those to yearn,  
Who find not aught thereto akin  
To make return?

“ ‘Shall he take much who little gives,  
And dwells in spirit far away,  
When she that in his presence lives,  
Doth never stray,

“ ‘But waking, guideth as beseems  
The happy house in order trim,  
And tends her babes, and sleeping, dreams  
Of them, and him?

“ ‘O base, O cold,’—while thus he spake  
The dream broke off, the vision fled,  
He carried on his speech awake  
And sighing said—



## THE LETTER L

I had—ah happy man!—I had  
A precious jewel in my breast,  
And while I kept it I was glad  
At work, at rest!

Call it a heart, and call it strong  
As upward stroke of eagle's wing  
Then call it weak, you shall not wrong  
The beating thing

In tangles of the jungle reed  
Whose heats are lit with tiger eyes,  
In shipwreck drifting with the weed  
Neath rainy skies,

Still youthful manhood fresh and keen  
At danger gazed with awed delight,  
As if sea would not drown I ween  
Nor serpent bite.

I had—ah happy! but tis gone,  
The priceless jewel one came by  
And saw and stood awhile to con  
With curious eye

And wished for it and faintly smiled  
From under-lashes black as doom  
With subtle sweetness tender mild  
That did illumine

## THE LETTER L

“ ‘The perfect face, and shed on it  
A charm, half feeling, half surprise,  
And brim with dreams the exquisite  
Brown blessed eyes

“ ‘Was it for this, no more but this,  
I took and laid it in her hand,  
By dimples ruled, to hint submiss,  
By frown unmanned?

“ ‘It was for this—and O farewell  
The fearless foot, the present mind,  
And steady will to breast the swell  
And face the wind!

“ ‘I gave the jewel from my breast,  
She played with it a little while  
As I sailed down into the west,  
Fed by her smile,

“ ‘Then weary of it—far from land,  
With sigh as deep as destiny,  
She let it drop from her fair hand  
Into the sea,

“ ‘And watched it sink, and I—and I  
What shall I do, for all is vain?  
No wave will bring, no gold will buy,  
No toil attain,

## THE LETTER L

Nor any diver reach to raise  
My jewel from the blue abyss  
Or could they still I should but praise  
Their work amiss.

Thrown thrown away! But I love yet  
The fair fair hand which did the deed  
That wayward sweetness to forget  
Were bitter meed.

No let it lie, and let the wave  
Roll over it for evermore  
Whelmed where the sailor hath his grave—  
The sea her store.

My heart my sometime happy heart!  
And O for once let me complain,  
I must forgo life's better part—  
Man's dearer gain.

I worked afar that I might rear  
A peaceful home on English soil  
I laboured for the gold and gear—  
I loved my toil

For ever in my spirit spake  
The natural whisper 'Well 't will be  
When loving wife and children break  
Their bread with thee!

## *THE LETTER L*

“ ‘The gathered gold is turned to dross,  
The wife hath faded into air,  
My heart is thrown away, my loss  
I cannot spare

“ ‘Not spare unsated thought her food—  
No, not one rustle of the fold,  
Nor scent of eastern sandalwood,  
Nor gleam of gold,

“ ‘Nor quaint devices of the shawl,  
Far less the drooping lashes meek,  
The gracious figure, lithe and tall,  
The dimpled cheek,

“ ‘And all the wonders of her eyes,  
And sweet caprices of her air,  
Albert, indignant reason cries,  
‘Fool! have a care

“ ‘ ‘Fool, join not madness to mistake,  
Thou knowest she loved thee not a whit,  
Only that she thy heart might break—  
She wanted it,

“ ‘ ‘Only the conquered thing to chain  
So fast that none might set it free,  
Nor other woman there might reign  
And comfort thee

## THE LETTER L

Robbed robbed of life's illusions sweet  
Love dead outside her closed door  
And passion fainting at her feet  
To wake no more

What canst thou give that unknown  
bride  
Whom thou didst work for in the waste  
Ere fated love was born and cried—  
Was dead ungraced?

No more but this the partial care,  
The natural kindness for its own,  
The trust that waxeth unaware,  
As worth is known

Observance and complacent thought  
Indulgent, and the honour due  
That many another man has brought  
Who brought love too.

Nay then, forbid it Heaven! he said  
The saintly vision fades from me  
O bands and chains! I cannot wed—  
I am not free. "

With that he raised his face to view  
What think you," asking of my tale?  
And was he right to let the dew  
Of morn exhale,

## THE LETTER L

“And burdened in the noontide sun,  
The grateful shade of home forgo—  
Could he be right—I ask as one  
Who fain would know?”

He spoke to her and spoke to me,  
The rebel rose-hue dyed her cheek,  
The woven crown lay on her knee,  
She would not speak

And I with doubtful pause—averse  
To let occasion drift away—  
I answered—“If his case were worse  
Than word can say,

“Time is a healer of sick hearts,  
And women have been known to choose,  
With purpose to allay their smarts,  
And tend their bruise,

“These for themselves Content to give,  
In their own lavish love complete,  
Taking for sole prerogative  
Their tendance sweet

“Such meeting in their diadem  
Of crowning love’s æthéreal fire,  
Himself he robs who robbeth them  
Of their desire

## THE LETTER L

Therefore the man who dreaming cried  
Against his lot that evensong  
I judge him honest and decide  
That he was wrong "

When I am judged, ah may my fate "  
He whispered in thy code be read!  
Be thou both judge and advocate."  
Then turned, he said—

Fair weaver!" touching while he spoke,  
The woven crown, the weaving hand  
And do you this decree revoke,  
Or may it stand?

This friend, you ever think her right—  
She is not wrong then?" Soft and low  
The little trembling word took flight  
She answered No."

## PRESENT

A meadow where the grass was deep  
Rich square, and golden to the view  
A belt of elms with level sweep  
About it grew

The sun beat down on it, the line  
Of shade was clear beneath the trees  
There by a clustering eglantine  
We sat at ease.

## THE LETTER L

And O the buttercups' that field  
O' the cloth of gold, where pennons  
swam—

Where France set up his lily shield,  
His oriflamme,

And Henry's lion-standard rolled  
What was it to their matchless sheen,  
Their million million drops of gold  
Among the green'

We sat at ease in peaceful trust,  
For he had written, "Let us meet,  
My wife grew tired of smoke and dust,  
And London heat,

"And I have found a quiet grange,  
Set back in meadows sloping west,  
And there our little ones can range  
And she can rest

"Come down, that we may show the view,  
And she may hear your voice again,  
And talk her woman's talk with you  
Along the lane."

Since he had drawn with listless hand  
The letter, six long years had fled,  
And winds had blow about the sand,  
And they were wed



## THE LETTER L

Two rosy urchins near him played,  
Or watched, entranced the shapely ships  
That with his knife for them he made  
Of elder slips.

And where the flowers were thickest shed  
Each blossom like a burnished gem  
A creeping baby reared its head  
And cooed at them.

And calm was on the father's face,  
And love was in the mother's eyes  
She looked and listened from her place,  
In tender wise.

She did not need to raise her voice  
, That they might hear she sat so nigh  
Yet we could speak when 't was our choice  
And soft reply

Holding our quiet talk apart  
Of household things till all unsealed  
The guarded outworks of the heart  
Began to yield

And much that prudence will not dip  
The pen to fix and send away  
Passed safely over from the lip  
That summer day

## THE LETTER L

"I should be happy," with a look  
Towards her husband where he lay  
Lost in the pages of his book,  
Soft did she say

"I am, and yet no lot below  
For one whole day eludeth care,  
To marriage all the stories flow,  
And finish there

"As if with marriage came the end,  
The entrance into settled rest,  
The calm to which love's tossings tend,  
The quiet breast

"For me love played the low preludes,  
Yet life began but with the ring,  
Such infinite solitudes  
Around it cling

"I did not for my heart divine  
Her destiny so meek to grow,  
The higher nature matched with mine  
Will have it so

"Still I consider it, and still  
Acknowledge it my master made,  
Above me by the steadier will  
Of nought afraid

## THE LETTER L

Above me by the candid speech  
The temperate judgment of its own  
The keener thoughts that grasp and reach,  
At things unknown.

But I look up and he looks down,  
And thus our married eyes can meet  
Unclouded his, and clear of frown  
And gravely sweet.

And yet, O good, O wise and true!  
I would for all my fealty  
That I could be as much to you  
As you to me

And knew the deep secure content  
Of wives who have been hardly won,  
And, long petitioned gave assent,  
Jealous of none.

But proudly sure in all the earth  
No other in that homage shares  
Nor other woman's face or worth  
Is prized as theirs."

I said *And yet no lot below  
For one whole day eludeth care*  
Your thought." She answered, Even so.  
I would beware

## THE LETTER L

"Regretful questionings, be sure  
That very seldom do they rise,  
Nor for myself do I endure—  
I sympathize

"For once"—she turned away her head,  
Across the grass she swept her hand—  
"There was a letter once," she said,  
"Upon the sand "

"There was, in truth, a letter writ  
On sand," I said, "and swept from view,  
But that same hand which fashioned it  
Is given to you

"Efface the letter, wherefore keep  
An image which the sands forgo?"  
"Albeit that fear had seemed to sleep,"  
She answered low,

"I could not choose but wake it now,  
For do but turn aside your face,  
A house on yonder hilly brow  
Your eyes may trace

"The chestnut shelters it, ah me,  
That I should have so faint a heart'  
But yestereve, as by the sea  
I sat apart,

## THE LETTER L

I heard a name I saw a hand  
Of passing stranger point that way—  
And will he meet her on the strand,  
When late we stray?

For she is come, for she is there,  
I heard it in the dusk, and heard  
Admiring words, that named her fair  
But little stirred

By beauty of the wood and wave,  
And weary of an old man's sway  
For it was sweeter to enslave  
Than to obey

—The voice of one that near us stood,  
The rustle of a silken fold  
A scent of eastern sandalwood,  
A gleam of gold!

A lady! In the narrow space  
Between the husband and the wife,  
But nearest him—she showed a face  
With dangers rife

A subtle smile that dimpling fled  
As night-black lashes rose and fell  
I looked and to myself I said  
The letter L.

## *THE LETTER L*

He, too, looked up, and with arrest  
Of breath and motion held his gaze,  
Nor cared to hide within his breast  
His deep amaze,

Nor spoke till on her near advance  
His dark cheek flushed a ruddier hue,  
And with his change of countenance  
Hers altered too

"Lenore!" his voice was like the cry  
Of one entreating, and he said  
But that—then paused with such a sigh  
As mourns the dead

And seated near, with no demur  
Of bashful doubt she silence broke,  
Though I alone could answer her  
When first she spoke

She looked her eyes were beauty's own,  
She shed their sweetness into his,  
Nor spared the married wife one moan  
That bitterest is

She spoke, and lo, her loveliness  
Methought she damaged with her tongue,  
And every sentence made it less,  
So false they rung,

## THE LETTER L

The rallying voice, the light demand  
Half flippant, half unsatisfied  
The vanity sincere and bland—  
The answers wide.

And now her talk was of the East  
And next her talk was of the sea  
And has the love for it increased  
You shared with me?"

He answered not but grave and still  
With earnest eyes her face perused,  
And locked his lips with steady will  
As one that mused—

That mused and wondered. Why his gaze  
Should dwell on her methought was  
plain  
But reason that should wonder raise  
I sought in vain.

And near and near the children drew  
Attracted by her rich array  
And gems that trembling into view  
Like raindrops lay

He spoke the wife her baby took  
And pressed the little face to hers  
What pain so<sup>o</sup>er her bosom shook  
What jealous stir

## THE LETTER L

Might stab her heart, she hid them so,  
The cooing babe a veil supplied,  
And if she listened none might know,  
Or if she sighed,

Or if forecasting grief and care  
Unconscious solace thence she drew,  
And lulled her babe, and unaware  
Lulled sorrow too

The lady, she interpreter  
For looks or language wanted none,  
If yet dominion stayed with her—  
So lightly won,

If yet the heart she wounded sore  
Could yearn to her, and let her see  
The homage that was evermore  
Disloyalty,

If sign would yield that it had bled,  
Or rallied from the faithless blow,  
Or sick or sullen stooped to wed,  
She craved to know

Now dreamy deep, now sweetly keen,  
Her asking eyes would round him shine,  
But guarded lips and settled men  
Refused the sign



## THE LETTER L

And unbeguiled and unbetrayed  
The wonder yet within his breast  
It seemed a watchful part he played  
Against her quest.

Until with accent of regret  
She touched upon the past once more,  
As if she dared him to forget  
His dream of yore.

And words of little weight let fall  
The fancy of the lower mind  
How waxing life must needs leave all  
Its best behind

How he had said that he would fain  
(One morning on the halcyon sea)  
That life would at a stand remain  
Eternally

And sails be mirrored in the deep  
As then they were, for evermore  
And happy spirits wake and sleep  
Afar from shore

The well-contented heart be fed  
Ever as they and all the world  
(It were not small) unshadowed  
When sails were furled.

## THE LETTER L

"Your words"—a pause, and quietly  
With touch of calm self-ridicule  
"It may be so—for then," said he,  
"I was a fool "

With that he took his book, and left  
An awkward silence to my care,  
That soon I filled with questions deft  
And debonair,

And slid into an easy vein,  
The favourite picture of the year,  
The grouse upon her lord's domain—  
The salmon weir,

Till she could feign a sudden thought  
Upon neglected guests, and rise,  
And make us her adieux, with nought  
In her dark eyes

Acknowledging or shame or pain,  
But just unveiling for our view  
A little smile of still disdain  
As she withdrew

Then nearer did the sunshine creep,  
And warmer came the wafting breeze,  
The little babe was fast asleep  
On mother's knees

## THE LETTER L

Fair was the face that o'er it leant  
The cheeks with beauteous blushes dyed  
The downcast lashes, shyly bent,  
That failed to hide

Some tender shame. She did not see  
She felt his eyes that would not stir  
She looked upon her babe, and he  
So looked at her

So grave, so wondering so content,  
As one new waked to conscious life,  
Whose sudden joy with fear is blent  
He said "My wife."

My wife, how beautiful you are!"  
Then closer at her side reclined,  
The bold brown woman from afar  
Comes, to me blind.

And by comparison I see  
The majesty of matron grace,  
And learn how pure, how fair can be  
My own wife's face

Pure with all faithful passion fair  
With tender smiles that come and go  
And comforting as April air  
After the snow

## THE LETTER L

"Fool that I was' my spirit frets  
And marvels at the humbling truth,  
That I have deigned to spend regrets  
On my bruised youth

"Its idol mocked thee, seated nigh,  
And shamed me for the mad mistake,  
I thank my God He could deny,  
And she forsake

"Ah, who am I, that God hath saved  
Me from the doom I did desire,  
And crossed the lot myself had craved,  
To set me higher?

"What have I done that He should bow  
From heaven to choose a wife for me?  
And what deserved, He should endow  
My home with THEE?

"My wife!" With that she turned her  
face  
To kiss the hand about her neck,  
And I went down and sought the place  
Where leaped the beck—

The busy beck, that still would run  
And fall, and falter its refrain,  
And pause and shimmer in the sun,  
And fall again

## *THE LETTER L*

It led me to the sandy shore  
We sang together it and I—  
The daylight comes, the dark is o'er  
The shadows fly "

I lost it on the sandy shore  
O wife!" its latest murmurs fall  
O wife be glad and fear no more  
The letter L

The High Tide  
on the Coast of  
Lincolnshire (1571)



The old mayor climbed the belfry tower,  
The ringers ran by two, by three,  
“Pull if ye never pulled before,  
Good ringers, pull your best,” quoth  
he

“Play uppe, play uppe, O Boston bells'  
Ply all your changes, all your swells,  
Play uppe ‘The Brides of Enderby’ ”

Men say it was a stolen tyde—

The Lord that sent it, He knows all,  
But in myne ears doth still abide

The message that the bells let fall  
And there was nought of strange, beside  
The flights of mews and peewits pied  
By millions crouched on the old sea  
wall

I sat and spun within the doore,  
My thread brake off, I raised myne  
eyes,

## THE HIGH TIDE

The level sun like ruddy ore,  
Lay sinking in the barren skies  
And dark against day's golden death  
She moved where Lindis wandereth  
My sonne's faire wife, Elizabeth.

Cusha! Cusha! Cusha!" calling  
Ere the early dews were falling  
Farre away I heard her song  
Cusha! Cusha!" all along;  
Where the reedy Lindis floweth  
Floweth floweth,  
From the meads where melick groweth  
Faintly came her milking song—

Cusha! Cusha! Cusha!" calling  
For the dews will soone be falling  
Leave your meadow grasses mellow  
Mellow mellow  
Quit your cowlips, cowlips yellow  
Come uppe Whitefoot, come uppe Light  
foot  
Quit the stalks of parsley hollow  
Hollow hollow;  
Come uppe Jetty rise and follow  
From the clovers lift your head  
Come uppe Whitefoot come uppe Light  
foot  
Come uppe Jetty rise and follow  
Jetty to the milking shed."

## THE HIGH TIDE

It it be long, ay, long ago,  
When I beginne to think howe long,  
Againe I hear the Lindis flow,  
Swift as an arrowe, sharpe and strong,  
And all the aire, it seemeth mee,  
Bin full of floating bells (sayth shee),  
That ring the tune of Enderby

Alle fresh the level pasture lay,  
And not a shadowe mote be seene,  
Save where full fyve good miles away  
The steeple towered from out the  
greene,  
And lo! the great bell farre and wide  
Was heard in all the country side  
That Saturday at eventide

The swanherds where their sedges are  
, Moved on in sunset's golden breath,  
The shepherde lads I heard afarre,  
And my sonne's wife, Elizabeth,  
Till floating o'er the grassy sea  
Came downe that kyndly message free,  
The "Brides of Mavis Enderby"

Then some looked uppe into the sky,  
And all along where Lindis flows  
To where the goodly vessels lie,  
And where the lordly steeple shows  
They sayde, " And why should this thing be?



## THE HIGH TIDE

What danger lowers by land or sea?  
They ring the tune of Enderby!

For evil news from Mablethorpe,  
Of pyrate galleys warping down  
For shippes ashore beyond the scope  
They have not spared to wake the  
towne  
But while the west bin red to see,  
And storms be none, and pyrates flee  
Why ring The Brides of Enderby?"

I looked without, and lo! my sonne  
Came riding downe with might and  
main  
He raised a shout as he drew on,  
Till all the welkin rang again  
Elizabeth! Elizabeth!"  
(A sweeter woman neer drew breath  
Than my sonnes wife Elizabeth.)

The olde sea wall (he cried) is downe,  
The rising tide comes on apace  
And boats adrift in yonder towne  
Go sailing uppe the market place."  
He shook as one that looks on death  
God save you mother!" straight he  
saith  
Where is my wife, Elizabeth?"

## THE HIGH TIDE

"Good sonne, where Lindis winds away,  
With her two barns I marked her  
long,  
And ere yon bells beganne to play  
Afair I heard her milking song "  
He looked across the grassy lea,  
To right, to left, "Ho Enderby !"  
They ring "The Brides of Enderby " !

With that he cried and beat his breast,  
For, lo ! along the river's bed  
A mighty cygre reared his crest,  
And uppe the Lindis raging sped  
It swept with thunderous noises loud,  
Shaped like a curling snow-white cloud,  
Or like a demon in a shroud

And rearing Lindis backward pressed  
Shook ill her trembling bankes amaine,  
Then madly at the cygre's breast  
Flung uppe her weltering walls again  
Then bankes came downe with ruin and  
rout—  
Then beaten foam flew around about—  
Then all the mighty floods were out

So farre, so fast the cygre drave,  
The heart had hardly tyme to beat,  
Before a shallow seething wave  
Sobbed in the grasses at oure feet

## THE HIGH TIDE

The feet had hardly time to flee  
Before it brake against the knee  
And all the world was in the sea.

Upon the roose we sate that night  
The noise of bells went sweeping by  
I marked the lofty beacon light  
Stream from the church tower red and  
high—  
A lurid mark and dread to see  
And awsome bells they were to mee,  
That in the dark rang Enderby."

They rang the sailor lads to guide  
From roose to roose who fearless rowed  
And I—my sonne was at my side  
And yet the ruddy beacon glowed  
And yet he moaned beneath his breath  
Oh come in life, or come in death!  
O lost! my love, Elizabeth."

And didst thou visit him no more?  
Thou didst, thou didst, my daughter  
deare  
The waters laid thee at his doore  
Ere yet the early dawn was clear  
Thy pretty bairns in fast embrace  
The lifted sun shone on thy face  
Downe drifted to thy dwelling-place

## THE HIGH TIDE

That flow strewed wrecks about the  
grass,

That ebbe swept out the flocks to sea,  
A fatal ebbe and flow, alas !

To manye more than myne and mee  
But each will mourn his own (she saith)  
And sweeter woman ne'er drew breath  
Than my sonne's wife, Elizabeth

I shall never hear her more  
By the reedy Lindis shore,  
"Cusha ! Cusha ! Cusha !" calling,  
Ere the early dewes be falling ,  
I shall never hear her song,  
"Cusha ! Cusha !" all along  
Where the sunny Lindis floweth,  
Goeth, floweth,  
From the meads where melick groweth,  
When the water winding down,  
Onward floweth to the town

I shall never see her more  
Where the reeds and rushes quiver,  
Shiver, quiver,  
Stand beside the sobbing river,  
Sobbing, throbbing, in its falling  
To the sandy lonesome shore,  
I shall never hear her calling,  
"Leave your meadow grasses mellow,  
Mellow, mellow ,

## *THE HIGH TIDE*

Quit your cowlips, cowlips yellow  
Come uppe Whitefoot come uppe Light  
foot  
Quit your pipes of parsley hollow  
Hollow hollow  
Come uppe Lightfoot, rise and follow  
Lightfoot, Whitefoot  
From your clovers lift the head  
Come uppe Jetty follow follow  
Jetty to the milking shed."

## Afternoon at a Parsonage



*(The Parson's Brother, Sister, and Two  
Children )*

### *Preface*

What wonder man should fail to stay  
A nurseling wafted from above,  
The growth celestial come astray,  
That tender growth whose name is  
Love !

It is as if high winds in heaven  
Had shaken the celestial trees,  
And to this earth below had given  
Some feathered seeds from one of these

O perfect love that 'dureth long !  
Dear growth, that shaded by the palms,  
And breathed on by the angel's song,  
Blooms on in heaven's eternal calms !

## AFTERNOON AT A PARSONAGE

How great the task to guard thee here,  
Where wind is rough and frost is  
keen  
And all the ground with doubt and fear  
Is chequered birth and death between!

Space is against thee—it can part  
Time is against thee—it can chill  
Words—they but render half the heart  
Deeds—they are poor to our rich will.

---

*Merton.* Though she had loved me I  
had never bound  
Her beauty to my darkness that had  
been  
Too hard for her Sadder to look so  
near  
Into a face all shadow than to stand  
Aloof and then withdraw and afterwards  
Suffer forgetfulness to comfort her  
I think so and I loved her therefore I  
Have no complaint albeit she is not  
mine  
And yet—and yet, withdrawing I would  
fain  
She would have pleaded duty—would have  
said  
My father wills it " would have turned  
away

## AFTERNOON AT A PARSONAGE

As lingering, or unwillingly, for then  
She would have done no damage to the  
past

Now she has roughly used it—flung it  
down

And brushed its bloom away If she had  
said,

“Sir, I have promised, therefore, lo’ my  
hand”—

Would I have taken it? Ah no’ by all  
Most sacred, no’

I would for my sole share  
Have taken first her recollected blush  
The day I won her, next her shining  
tears—

The tears of our long parting, and for all  
The rest—her cry, her bitter heart-sick  
cry,

That day or night (I know not which it  
was,

The days being always night), that darkest  
night,

When being led to her I heard her cry,  
“O blind’ blind’ blind’”

Go with thy chosen mate  
The fashion of thy going nearly cured  
The sorrow of it I am yet so weak  
That half my thoughts go<sub>c</sub> after thee, but  
not

So weak that I desire to have it so



## AFTERNOON AT A PARSONAGE

JESSIE, seated at the piano, sings

When the dimpled water slippeth  
Full of laughter on its way  
And her wing the wagtail dippeth  
Running by the brink at play;  
When the poplar leaves tremble  
Turn their edges to the light,  
And the far-up clouds resemble  
Veils of gauze most clear and white;  
And the sunbeams fall and flatter  
Woodland moss and branches brown  
And the glossy flocks chatter  
Up and down, up and down  
Though the heart be not attending  
Having music of her own  
On the grass, through meadows wending  
It is sweet to walk alone.  
When the falling waters utter  
Something mournful on their way  
And departing swallows flutter  
Taking leave of bank and brake;  
When the chaffinch idly sitteth  
With her mate upon the sheaves,  
And the wistful robin sitteth  
Over beds of yellow leaves;  
When the clouds, like ghosts that ponder  
Evil fate, float by and frown  
And the listless wind doth wander  
Up and down, up and down:  
Though the heart be not attending  
Having sorrows of her own

## AFTERNOON AT A PARSONAGE

Through the fields and fallows wending,  
It is sad to walk alone

*Merton* Blind ! blind ! blind !  
Oh ! sitting in the dark for evermore,  
And doing nothing—putting out a hand  
To feel what lies about me, and to say  
Not “This is blue or red,” but “This is  
cold,  
And this the sun is shining on, and this  
I know not till they tell its name to  
me ”

O that I might behold once more, my  
God !

The shining rulers of the night and day ,  
Or a star twinkling , or an almond-tree,  
Pink with her blossom and alive with  
bees,

Standing against the azure ! O my  
sight !

Lost, and yet living in the sunlit cells  
Of memory—that only lightsome place  
Where lingers yet the dayspring of my  
youth

The years of mourning for thy death are  
long

Be kind, sweet memory ! O<sup>c</sup> desert me not !  
For oft thou show'st me lucent opal seas,

## AFTERNOON AT A PARSONAGE

Fringed with their cocoa-palms, and  
dwarf red crags  
Whereon the placid moon doth rest her  
chin";  
For oft by favour of thy visitings  
I feel the dimness of an Indian night,  
And lo! the sun is coming Red as  
rust  
Between the latticed blind his presence  
burns  
A ruby ladder running up the wall;  
And all the dust printed with pigeons  
feet  
Is reddened and the crows that stalk  
anear  
Begin to trail for heat their glossy  
wings,  
And the red flowers give back at once the  
dew  
For night is gone and day is born so  
fast  
And is so strong that huddled us in  
flight  
The fleeting darkness paleth to a shade  
And while she calls to sleep and dreams  
Come on"  
Suddenly waked the sleepers rub their  
eyes  
Which having opened lo! she is no  
more.

## . AFTERNOON AT A PARSONAGE

O misery and mourning! I have felt—  
Yes, I have felt like some deserted world  
That God had done with, and had cast  
aside

To rock and stagger through the gulfs of  
space,

He never looking on it any more—  
Untilled, no use, no pleasure, not desired,  
Nor lighted on by angels in their flight  
From heaven to happier planets, and the  
race

That once had dwelt on it withdrawn or  
dead

Could such a world have hope that some  
blest day

God would remember her, and fashion her  
Anew?

*Jessie* What, dearest? Did you speak  
to me?

*Child* I think he spoke to us

*M* No, little elves,  
You were so quiet that I half forgot  
Your neighbourhood What are you doing  
there?

*J* They sit together on the window-mat  
Nursing their dolls

*C* Yes, Uncle, our new dolls—  
Our best dolls, that you gave us

*M* Did you say  
The afternoon was bright?

## AFTERNOON IN A PARSONAGE

*J* Yes bright indeed!  
The sun is on the plane-tree and it flames—  
All red and orange.

*C* I can see my father—  
Look! look! the leaves are falling on his  
gown.

*M* Where?

*C* In the churchyard, Uncle—  
he is gone  
He passed behind the tower

*M* I heard a bell  
There is a funeral then behind the  
church.

*2nd Child.* Are the trees sorry when their  
leaves drop off?

*1st Child.* You talk such silly words —  
no not at all.

There goes another leaf

*2nd Child.* I did not see

*1st Child.* Look! on the grass between  
the little hills,

Just where they planted Amy

*J* Amy died—  
Dear little Amy! when you talk of her  
Say she is gone to heaven.

*2nd Child.* They planted her—  
Will she come up next year?

*1st Child.* No, not so soon  
But some day God will call her to come  
up

## , AFTERNOON AT A PARSONAGE

And then she will    Papa knows every-  
thing—

He said she would before he planted her  
*2nd Child*    It was at night she went to  
heaven    Last night

We saw a star before we went to bed  
*1st Child*    Yes, Uncle, did you know?

A large bright star,  
And at her side she had some little ones—  
Some young ones

*M*            Young ones' no, my little maid,  
Those stars are very old

*1st Child*                            What' all of them?

*M*    Yes

*1st Child*    Older than our father?

*M*    Older, far

*2nd Child*    They must be tired of shining  
there so long

Perhaps they wish they might come down  
*J*    Perhaps'

Dear children, talk of what you understand  
Come, I must lift the trailing creepers up  
That last night's wind has loosened

*1st Child*    May we help?

Aunt, may we help to nail them?

*J*    We shall see

Go, find and bring the hammer, and some  
shreds

## AFTERNOON AT A PARSONAGE

[Steps outside the window lifts  
a branch and sings]

Should I change my allegiance for rancour  
If fortune changes her side?  
Or should I like a vessel at anchor  
Turn with the turn of the tide?  
Lift! O lift, thou lowering sky;  
An thou wilt thy gloom forgo!  
An thou wilt not, he and I  
Need not part for drifts of snow

*M* [within]. Lift! no thou lowering sky  
thou wilt not lift—

Thy motto readeth "Never"

*Children.* Here they are!

Here are the nails! and may we help?

*J*

You shall

If I should want help.

*1st Child.* Will you want it then?

Please want it—we like nailing

*2nd Child.* Yes, we do.

*J* It seems I ought to want it hold  
the bough,

And each may nail in turn.

[Sings]

Like a daisy I was, near him growing:

Must I move because favours flag

And be like a brown wallflower blowing

Far out of reach in a crag?

## AFTERNOON AT A PARSONAGE

Lift! O lift, thou lowering sky,  
An thou canst, thy blue regain!  
An thou canst not, he and I  
Need not part for drops of rain

*1st Child* Now, have we nailed enough?

*J* [*trains the creepers*] Yes, you may go,  
But do not play too near the churchyard  
path

*M* [*within*] Even misfortune does not  
strike so near

As my dependence O, in youth and  
strength

To sit a timid coward in the dark,  
And feel before I set a cautious step!  
It is so very dark, so far more dark  
Than any night that day comes after—night  
In which there would be stars, or else  
at least

The silvered portion of a sombre cloud  
Through which the moon is plunging

*J* [*entering*] Merton!

*M* Yes

*J* Dear Merton, did you know that I  
could hear?

*M* No e'en my solitude is not mine  
now,

And if I be alone is oft-times doubt  
Alas! far more than eyesight have I lost,  
For manly courage drifteth after it—



## AFTERNOON AT A PARSONAGE

Even as a splintered spar would drift away  
From some dismantled wreck. Hear I  
complain—

Like a weak ailing woman I complain.

*J* For the first time.

*M* I cannot bear the dark.

*J* My brother! you do bear it—bear  
it well—

Have borne it twelve long months, and  
not complained.

Comfort your heart with music all the air  
Is warm with sunbeams where the organ  
stands.

You like to feel them on you. Come and  
play

*M* My fate, my fate is lonely!

*J* So it is—

I know it is.

*M* And pity breaks my heart.

*J* Does it, dear Merton?

*M* Yes I say it does.

What! do you think I am so dull of ear  
That I can mark no changes in the tones  
That reach me? Once I liked not girlish  
pride

And that coy quiet, chary of reply  
That held me distant now the sweetest lips  
Open to entertain me—fairest hands  
Are proffered me to guide.

*J* That is not well?

## 1 AFTERNOON AT A PARSONAGE

M No give me coldness, pride, or still  
disdain,  
Gentle withdrawal Give me anything  
But this—a tearless, sweet, confiding ease,  
Whereof I may expect, I may exact,  
Considerate care and have it—gentle  
speech,  
And have it Give me anything but this!  
For they who give it, give it in the faith  
That I will not misdeem them, and for-  
get  
My doom so far as to perceive thereby  
Hope of a wife They make this thought  
too plain,  
They wound me—O they cut me to the  
heart!  
When have I said to any one of them,  
“I am a blind and desolate man,—come  
here,  
I pray you—be as eyes to me?” When  
said,  
Even to her whose pitying voice is sweet  
To my dark ruined heart, as must be hands  
That clasp a lifelong captive’s through the  
grate,  
And who will ever lend her delicate aid  
To guide me, dark incumbrance that I  
am!—  
When have I said to her, “Comforting  
voice,”

## AFTERNOON AT A PARSONAGE

Belonging to a face unknown I pray  
Be my wife's voice!"

*J* Never my brother—no  
You never have!

*M* What could she think of me  
If I forgot myself so far? or what  
Could she reply?

*J* You ask not as men ask  
Who care for an opinion else perhaps,  
Although I am not sure—although per  
haps,  
I have no right to give one—I should say  
She would reply "I will!"

---

### *Afterthought*

Man dwells apart, though not alone,  
He walks among his peers unread  
The best of thoughts which he hath known  
For lack of listeners are not said.

Yet dreaming on earth's clustered isles,  
He saith, "They dwell not lone like men  
Forgetful that their sunflecked smiles  
Flash far beyond each other's ken."

He looks on God's eternal suns  
That sprinkle the celestial blue  
And saith "Ah! happy shining ones,  
I would that men were grouped like you!"

• *AFTERNOON AT A PARSONAGE*

Yet this is sure the loveliest star  
That clustered with its peers we see,  
Only because from us so far  
Doth near its fellows seem to be.

## Songs of Seven

### SEVEN TIMES ONE. EXULTATION

There s no dew left on the daisies and  
    clover

There s no rain left in heaven  
I've said my "seven times " over and over  
Seven times one are seven.

I am old, so old, I can write a letter  
    My birthday lessons are done  
The lambs play always, they know no  
    better  
They are only one times one.

O moon! in the night I have seen you  
    sailing  
And shining so round and low  
You were bright! ah bright! but your  
    light is falling—  
You are nothing but a bow

You moon, have you done something wrong  
    in heaven  
That God has hidden your face?

## SONGS OF SEVEN

I hope if you have you will soon be for-  
given,  
And shine again in your place

O velvet bee, you're a dusty fellow,  
You've powdered your legs with gold!  
O brave marsh marybuds, rich and yellow,  
Give me your money to hold!

O columbine, open your folded wrapper,  
Where two twin turtle-doves dwell!  
O cuckoopint, toll me the purple clapper  
That hangs in your clear green bell!

And show me your nest with the young  
ones in it,  
I will not steal them away,  
I am old! you may trust me, linnet,  
linnet—  
I am seven times one to-day

### SEVEN TIMES TWO ROMANCE

You bells in the steeple, ring, ring out  
your changes,  
How many soever they be,  
And let the brown meadow-lark's note as  
he ranges  
Come over, come over to me

## SONGS OF SEVEN

Yet bird's clearest carol by fall or by  
    swelling  
    No magical sense conveys  
And bells have forgotten their old art of  
    telling  
    The fortune of future days.

Turn again turn again "once they rang  
    cheerily  
    While a boy listened alone  
Made his heart yearn again musing so  
    wearily  
    All by himself on a stone.

Poor bells! I forgive you your good days  
    are over  
    And mine, they are yet to be  
No listening no longing shall aught,  
    aught discover  
    You leave the story to me.

The foxglove shoots out of the green  
    matted heather  
    Preparing her hoods of snow  
She was idle and slept till the sunshiny  
    weather  
    O children take long to grow

## SONGS OF SEVEN

I wish, and I wish that the spring would  
go faster,  
Nor long summer bide so late,  
And I could grow on like the foxglove  
and aster,  
For some things are ill to wait

I wait for the day when dear hearts shall  
discover,  
While dear hands are laid on my head,  
"The child is a woman, the book may  
close over,  
For all the lessons are said "

I wait for my story—the birds cannot  
sing it,  
Not one, as he sits on the tree,  
The bells cannot ring it, but long years,  
O bring it!  
Such as I wish it to be

### SEVEN TIMES THREE LOVE

I leaned out of window, I smelt the white  
clover  
Dark, dark was the garden, I saw not  
the gate,



## SONGS OF SEVEN

Now if there be footsteps he comes,  
my one lover—

Hush nightingale hush! O sweet  
nightingale, wait

Till I listen and hear

If a step draweth near

For my love he is late!

The skies in the darkness stoop nearer  
and nearer

A cluster of stars hangs like fruit in  
the tree

The fall of the water comes sweeter comes  
clearer

To what art thou listening and what  
dost thou see?

Let the star-clusters grow

Let the sweet waters flow

And cross quickly to me.

You night moths that hover where honey  
brims over

From sycamore blossoms, or settle or  
sleep

You glowworms shine out and the path-  
way discover

To him that comes darkling along the  
rough steep.

## SONGS OF SEVEN

Ah, my sailor, make haste,  
For the time runs to waste,  
And my love lieth deep—

“Too deep for swift telling, and yet, my  
one lover,  
I've conned thee an answer, it waits  
thee to-night ”  
By the sycamore passed he, and through  
the white clover,  
Then all the sweet speech I had fashioned  
took flight,  
But I'll love him more, more  
Than e'er wife loved before,  
Be the days dark or bright

### SEVEN TIMES FOUR MATERNITY

Heigh ho' daisies and buttercups,  
Fair yellow daffodils, stately and tall'  
When the wind wakes how they rock in  
the grasses,  
And dance with the cuckoo-buds slender  
and small'  
Here's two bonny boys, and here's mother's  
own lasses,  
Eager to gather them all

## SONGS OF SEVEN

Heigh ho! daisies and buttercups!  
Mother shall thread them a daisy chain  
Sing them a song of the pretty hedge  
sparrow  
That loved her brown little ones loved  
them full fain  
Sing Heart, thou art wide though the  
house be but narrow"—  
Sing once, and sing it again.

Heigh ho! daisies and buttercups  
Sweet wagging cowslips, they bend and  
they bow;  
A ship sails afar over warm ocean waters,  
And haply one musing doth stand at  
her prow  
O bonny brown sons and O sweet little  
daughters,  
Maybe he thinks on you now!

Heigh ho! daisies and buttercups,  
Fair yellow daffodils, stately and tall—  
A sunshiny world full of laughter and  
leisure  
And fresh hearts unconscious of sorrow  
and thrall!  
Send down on their pleasure smiles passing  
its measure  
God that is over us all!

## SONGS OF SEVEN

### SEVEN TIMES FIVE WIDOWHOOD

I sleep and rest, my heart makes moan  
Before I am well awake,  
Let me bleed! O let me alone,  
Since I must not break.

For children wake, though fathers sleep  
With a stone at foot and at head.  
O sleepless God, for ever keep,  
Keep both living and dead!

I lift mine eyes, and what to see  
But a world happy and fair!  
I have not wished it to mourn with me—  
Comfort is not there

O what anear but golden brooms,  
And a waste of reedy rills!  
O what afar but the fine glooms  
On the rare blue hills!

I shall not die, but live forlore—  
How bitter it is to part!  
O to meet thee, my love, once more!  
O my heart, my heart!

No more to hear, no more to see!  
O that an echo might wake  
And waft one note of thy psalm to me  
Ere my heart-strings break!

## SONGS OF SEVEN

I should know it how faint soe'er  
And with angel voices blent  
O once to feel thy spirit anear  
I could be content!

Or once between the gates of gold  
While an entering angel trod,  
But once—thee sitting to behold  
On the hills of God!

### SEVEN TIMES SIX. GIVING IN MARRIAGE

To bear to nurse to rear  
To watch, and then to lose  
To see my bright ones disappear  
Drawn'up like morning dew—  
To bear to nurse, to rear  
To watch and then to lose  
Thus have I done when God drew near  
Among his own to choose.

To hear to heed, to wed,  
And with thy lord depart  
In tears that he as soon as shed  
Will let no longer smart—  
To hear to heed, to wed,  
This while thou didst I smiled  
For now it was not God who said  
Mother give me thy child.

## SONGS OF SEVEN

O fond, O fool, and blind,  
To God I gave with tears,  
But when a man like grace would bind,  
My soul put by her fears—  
O fond, O fool, and blind,  
God guards in happier spheres,  
That man will guard where he did bind  
Is hope for unknown years

To hear, to heed, to wed,  
Fair lot that maidens choose,  
Thy mother's tenderest words are said,  
Thy face no more she views,  
Thy mother's lot, my dear,  
She doth in nought accuse,  
Her lot to bear, to nurse, to rear,  
To love—and then to lose

### SILVEN TIMLS SEVLN LONGING FOR HOML

I

A song of a boat —  
There was once a boat on a billow  
Lightly she rocked to her port remote,  
And the foam was white in her wake  
like snow,  
And her frail mast bowed when the breeze  
would blow  
And bent like a wand of willow.

## SONGS OF SEVEN

### II

I shaded mine eyes one day when a boat  
Went curtsying over the billow  
I marked her course till a dancing mote  
She faded out on the moonlit foam  
And I stayed behind in the dear loved home  
And my thoughts all day were about  
the boat  
And my dreams upon the pillow

### III

I pray you hear my song of a boat,  
For it is but short —  
My boat you shall find none fairer afloat  
In river or port.  
Long I looked out for the lad she bore  
On the open desolate sea,  
And I think he sailed to the heavenly shore,  
For he came not back to me—  
Ah me!

### IV

A song of a nest —  
There was once a nest in a hollow  
Down in the mosses and knot grass  
pressed,  
Soft and warm, and full to the brim—  
Vetches leaned over it purple and dim  
With buttercup buds to follow

## SONGS OF SEVEN

### v

I pray you hear my song of a nest,  
For it is not long —  
You shall never light, in a summer quest  
The bushes among—  
Shall never light on a prouder sitler,  
A fairer nestful, nor ever know  
A softer sound than their tender twitter,  
That wind-like did come and go

### vi

I had a nestful once of my own,  
Ah happy, happy I!  
Right dearly I loved them but when they  
were grown  
They spread out their wings to fly—  
O, one after one they flew away  
Far up to the heavenly blue,  
To the better country, the upper day,  
And—I wish I was going too

### vii

I pray you, what is the nest to me,  
My empty nest?  
And what is the shore where I stood to  
see  
My boat sail down to the west?



## SONGS OF SEVEN

Can I call that home where I anchor yet,  
    Though my good man has sailed?  
Can I call that home where my nest  
    was set,  
    Now all its hope hath failed?  
Nay but the port where my sailor went,  
    And the land where my nestlings be  
There is the home where my thoughts are  
    sent  
    The only home for me—  
                                    Ah me!

## A Cottage in a Chine

We reached the place by night,  
And heard the waves breaking  
They came to meet us with candles alight  
To show the path we were taking  
A myrtle, trained on the gate, was white  
With tufted flowers down shaking

With head beneath her wing,  
A little wren was sleeping—  
So near, I had found it an easy thing  
To steal her for my keeping  
From the myrtle bough that with easy  
swing  
Across the path was sweeping

Down rocky steps rough-hewed,  
Where cup-mosses flowered,  
And under the trees, all twisted and rude,  
Wherewith the dell was dowered,  
They led us, where deep in its solitude  
Lay the cottage, leaf-embowered

## A COTTAGE IN A CHINE

The thatch was all bespread  
With climbing passion flowers  
They were wet and glistened with rain  
drops shed  
That day in genial showers.  
Was never a sweeter nest " we said  
Than this little nest of ours."

We laid us down to sleep  
But as for me—waking  
I marked the plunge of the muffled deep  
On its sandy reaches breaking  
For heart joyance doth sometimes keep  
From slumber like heart-aching

And I was glad that night  
With no reason ready  
To give my own heart for its deep delight  
That flowed like some tidal eddy  
Or shone like a star that was rising bright  
With comforting radiance steady

But on a sudden—hark!  
Music struck asunder  
Those meshes of bliss and I wept in the  
dark,  
So sweet was the unseen wonder  
So swiftly it touched, as if struck at a mark  
The trouble that joy kept under

## *A COTTAGE IN A CHINE*

rose—the moon outshone  
I saw the sea heaving,  
and a little vessel sailing alone,  
The small crisp wavelet cleaving,  
'Twas she as she sailed to her port un-  
known—  
Was that track of sweetness leaving

We know they music made  
In heaven, ere man's creation,  
But when God threw it down to us that  
strayed,  
It dropt with lamentation,  
And ever since doth its sweetness shade  
With sighs for its first station

Its joy suggests regret—  
Its most for more is yearning,  
And it brings to the soul that its voice  
hath met,  
No rest that cadence learning,  
But a conscious part in the sighs that fret  
Its nature for returning

O Eve, sweet Eve! methought  
When sometimes comfort winning,  
As she watched the first children's tender  
sport,  
Sole joy born since her sinning,

## A COTTAGE IN A CHINE

If a bird anear them sang it brought  
The pang as at beginning

While swam the unshed tear  
Her prattlers little heeding  
Would murmur This bird, with its carol  
clear  
When the red clay was kneaden  
And God made Adam our father dear  
Sang to him thus in Eden."

The moon went in—the sky  
And earth and sea hiding  
I laid me down with the yearning sigh  
Of that strain in my heart abiding  
I slept, and the barque that had sailed so  
nigh  
In my dream was ever gliding

I slept, but waked amazed,  
With sudden noise frighted  
And voices without and a flash that dazed  
My eyes from candles lighted.  
Ah! surely "methought, by these shouts  
upraised,  
Some travellers are benighted."

A voice was at my side—  
Waken madam waken!

## *A COTTAGE IN A CHINE*

The long-prayed-for ship at her anchor  
doth ride

Let the child from its rest be taken,  
For the captain doth weary for babe and  
for bride—

Waken, madam, waken!

“The home you left but late,  
He speeds to it light-hearted,  
By the wires he sent this news, and straight  
To you with it they started ”  
O joy for a yearning heart too great,  
O union for the parted!

We rose up in the night,  
The morning star was shining,  
We carried the child in its slumber light  
Out by the myrtles twining  
Orion over the sea hung bright,  
And glorious in declining

Mother, to meet her son,  
Smiled first, then wept the rather  
And wife, to bind up those links undone,  
And cherished words to gather,  
And to show the face of her little one,  
That had never seen its father

That cottage in a chine,  
We were not to behold it,

## *A COTTAGE IN A CHINE*

But there may the purest of sunbeams  
shine,

May freshest flowers enfold it  
For sake of the news which our hearts  
must twine

With the bower where we were told it!

Now oft left lone again

Sit mother and sit daughter  
And bless the good ship that sailed over  
the main,

And the favouring winds that brought  
her

While still some new beauty they fable  
and feign

For the cottage by the water

# Persephone

WRITTEN FOR "THE  
PORTFOLIO SOCIETY",  
JANUARY, 1862



*Subject given—"Light and Shade"*

She stepped upon Sicilian grass,  
Demeter's daughter fresh and fair,  
A child of light, a radiant lass,  
And gamesome as the morning air  
The daffodils were fair to see,  
They nodded lightly on the lea,  
Persephone—Persephone!

Lo! one she marked of rarer growth  
Than orchis or anemone,  
For it the maiden left them both,  
And parted from her company  
Drawn nigh she deemed it fairer still,  
And stooped to gather by the rill  
The daffodil, the daffodil

What ailed the meadow that it shook?  
What ailed the air of Sicily?



## PERSEPHONE

She wondered by the brattling brook,  
And trembled with the trembling lea.  
The coal-black horses rise—they rise  
O mother mother!" low she cries—  
Persephone—Persephone!

O light, light light!" she cries, fare-  
well

The coal-black horses wait for me.  
O shade of shades where I must dwell  
Demeter mother far from thee!  
Ah fated doom that I fulfil!  
Ah fateful flower beside the rill!  
The daffodil the daffodil!"

What ails her that she comes not home?  
Demeter seeks her far and wide,  
And gloomy-browed doth ceaseless roam  
From many a morn till eventide.  
My life, immortal though it be,  
Is nought " she cries, for want of  
thee,  
Persephone—Persephone!

Meadows of Enna let the rain  
No longer drop to feed your rills,  
Nor dew refresh the fields again  
With all their nodding daffodils!  
Fade, fade and droop O filled lea

## PERSEPHONE

Where thou, dear heart, wert rent from me -  
Persephone—Persephone!"

---

She reigns upon her dusky throne,  
    'Mid shades of heroes dread to see,  
Among the dead she breathes alone,  
    Persephone—Persephone!  
Or seated on the Elysian hill  
She dreams of earthly daylight still,  
And murmurs of the daffodil

A voice in Hades soundeth clear,  
    The shadows mourn and flit below,  
It cries—"Thou Lord of Hades, hear,  
    And let Demeter's daughter go  
The tender corn upon the lea  
Droops in her goddess gloom when she  
Cries for her lost Persephone

"From land to land she raging flies,  
    The green fruit falleth in her wake,  
And harvest fields beneath her eyes  
    To earth the grain unripened shake  
Arise, and set the maiden free,  
Why should the world such sorrow dree  
By reason of Persephone?"

He takes the cleft pomegranate seeds  
    "Love, eat with me this parting day,"

## PERSEPHONE

Then bids them fetch the coal-black  
steeds—

Demeter's daughter wouldst away?"  
The gates of Hades set her free  
She will return full soon " saith he—  
My wife, my wife Persephone."

Low laughs the dark king on his throne—  
I gave her of pomegranate seeds."  
Demeter's daughter stands alone  
Upon the fair Eleusian meads.  
Her mother meets her Hail! saith she—  
And doth our daylight dazzle thee,  
My love my child Persephone?

What moved thee daughter to forsake  
Thy fellow-maids that fatal morn  
And give thy dark lord power to take  
Thee living to his realm forlorn?"  
Her lips reply without her will.  
As one addressed who slumbereth still—  
The daffodil the daffodil!"

Her eyelids droop with light oppressed,  
And sunny wafts that round her stir  
Her cheek upon her mother's breast—  
Demeter's kisses comfort her  
Calm Queen of Hades, art thou she  
Who stepped so lightly on the lea—  
Persephone Persephone?

## PERSEPHONE

When, in her destined course, the moon  
Meets the deep shadow of this world,  
And labouring on doth seem to swoon  
Through awful wastes of dimness  
whirled—

Emerged at length, no trace hath she  
Of that dark hour of destiny,  
Still silvery sweet—Persephone

The greater world may near the less,  
And draw it through her weltering shade,  
But not one bidding trace impress  
Of all the darkness that she made.  
The greater soul that draweth thee  
Hath left his shadow print to see  
On thy fair face, Persephone!

Demeter sighs, but sure 'tis well  
The wife should love her destiny  
They part, and yet, as legends tell,  
She mourns her lost Persephone,  
While chant the maids of Enna still—  
"O fateful flower beside the rill—  
The daffodil, the daffodil!"

## A Sea Song



Old Albion sat on a crag of late  
And sung out— Ahoy! ahoy!  
Long life to the captain good luck to the  
mate,  
And this to my sailor boy!  
Come over come home,  
Through the salt sea foam  
My sailor my sailor boy

Here is a crown to be given away I ween  
A crown for my sailor's head  
And all for the worth of a widowed queen  
And the love of the noble dead  
And the fear and fame  
Of the island's name  
Where my boy was born and bred.

Content thee, content thee let it alone  
Thou marked for a choice so rare  
Though treaties be treaties, never a throne  
Was proffered for cause as fair  
Yet come to me home,  
Through the salt sea foam  
For the Greek must ask elsewhere.

## A SEA SONG

" 'Tis pity, my sailor, but who can tell?  
Many lands they look to me,  
One of these might be wanting a Prince  
as well,  
But that's as hereafter may be "  
She raised her white head  
And laughed, and she said  
" That's as hereafter may be "

## Brothers, and a Sermon



It was a village built in a green rent  
Between two cliffs that skirt the danger  
ous bay

A reef of level rock runs out to sea,  
And you may lie on it and look sheer down  
Just where the Grace of Sunderland was  
lost

And see the elastic banners of the dulce  
Rock softly and the orange star-fish creep  
Across the laver and the mackerel shoot  
Over and under it like silver boats  
Turning at will and plying under water

There on that reef we lay upon our breasts  
My brother and I and half the village lads  
For an old fisherman had called to us  
With "Sirs, the syle be come." And  
what are they?

My brother said, "Good lack! the old  
man cried

And shook his head to think you gentle-  
folk

## BROTHERS, AND A SERMON

Should ask what syle be! Look you, I  
can't say  
What syle be called in your fine diction-  
aries  
Nor what name God Almighty calls them  
by  
When their food's ready and He sends  
them south,  
But our folk call them syle, and nought  
but syle,  
And when they're grown, why then we  
call them herring  
I tell you, Sir, the water is as full  
Of them as pastures be of blades of grass,  
You'll draw a score out in a landing net,  
And none of them be longer than a pin

"Syle! ay, indeed, we should be badly off,  
I reckon, and so would God Almighty's  
gulls,"

He grumbled on in his quaint pety,  
"And all his other birds, if He should say  
I will not drive my syle into the south,  
The fisher folk may do without my syle,  
And do without the shoals of fish it draws  
To follow and feed on it"

This said, we made  
Our peace with him by means of two small  
coins,  
And down we ran and lay upon the reef,



## BROTHERS AND A SERMON

And saw the swimming infants emerald  
green

In separate shoals, the scarcely turning  
ebb

Bringing them in while sleek, and not  
intent

On chase but taking that which came to  
hand,

The full fed mackerel and the gurnet swam  
Between and settling on the polished sea  
A thousand snow white gulls sat lovingly  
In social rings, and twittered while they  
fed,

The village dogs and ours, elate and brave,  
Lay looking over barking at the fish  
Fast, fast the silver creatures took the bait,  
And when they heaved and floundered on  
the rock,

In beauteous misery a sudden pat  
Some shaggy pup would deal then back  
away

At distance eye them with sagacious doubt  
And shrink half frightened from the slippery  
things.

And so we lay from ebb-tide, till the flow  
Rose high enough to drive us from the  
reef;

The fisher lads went home across the  
sand

## *BROTHERS, AND A SERMON*

We climbed the cliff, and sat an hour or  
more,

Talking and looking down It was not  
talk

Of much significance, except for this—

That we had more in common than of old,

For both were tired, I with overwork,

He with inaction, I was glad at heart

To rest, and he was glad to have an ear

That he could grumble to, and half in jest

Rail at entails, deplore the fate of heirs,

And the misfortune of a good estate—

Misfortune that was sure to pull him down,

Make him a dreamy, selfish, useless man

Indeed he felt himself deteriorate

Already Thereupon he sent down showers

Of clattering stones, to emphasize his words

And leap the cliffs and tumble noisily

Into the seething wave And as for me

I railed at him and at ingratitude,

While rifling of the basket he had slung

Across his shoulders, then with right

good will

We fell to work and feasted like the

gods,

Like labourers, or like eager workhouse

folk

At Yuletide dinner, or, to say the whole

At once, like tired, hungry, healthy youth,

Until the meal being o'er, the tilted flask

## BROTHERS AND A SERMON

Drained of its latest drop the meat and  
bread

And ruddy cherries eaten and the dogs  
Mumbling the bones this elder brother  
of mine—

This man that never felt an ache or pain  
In his broad, well knit frame and never  
knew

The trouble of an unforgiven grudge  
The sting of a regretted meanness, nor  
The desperate struggle of the unendowed  
For place and for possession—he began  
To sing a rhyme that he himself had  
wrought

Sending it out with cogitative pause,  
As if the scene where he had shaped it  
first

Had rolled it back on him, and meeting it  
Thus unaware, he was of doubtful mind  
Whether his dignity it well becomed  
To sing of pretty maiden

Goldilocks sat on the grass,

Tying up of posies rare;

Hardly could a sunbeam pass

Through the cloud that was her hair

Purple orchis lasteth long

Primrose flowers are pale and clear;

O the maiden sang a song

It would do you good to hear!

## *BROTHERS, AND A SERMON*

Sad before her leaned the boy,  
"Goldilocks that I love well,  
Happy creature fair and coy,  
Think o' me, Sweet Amabel"  
Goldilocks she shook apart,  
Looked with doubtful, doubtful eyes,  
Like a blossom in her heart  
Opened out her first surprise

As a gloriole sign o' grace,  
Goldilocks, ah tall and flow,  
On the blooming, childlike face,  
Dimple, dimple, come and go  
Give her time, on grass and sky  
Let her gaze if she be fain  
As they looked ere he drew nigh,  
They will never look again

Ah! the playtime she has known,  
While her goldilocks grew long,  
Is it like a nestling flown,  
Childhood over like a song?  
Yes, the boy may clear his brow,  
Though she thinks to say him nay,  
When she sighs, "I cannot now—  
Come again some other day"

"Hold' there," he cried, half angry with  
himself,  
"That ending goes amiss" then turned  
again

## *BROTHERS AND A SERMON*

To the old argument that we had held—  
Now look you!" said my brother you  
may talk  
Till weary of the talk, I answer Ay  
There's reason in your words and you  
may talk  
Till I go on to say This should be so  
And you may talk till I shall further own  
It is so yes, I am a lucky dog!  
Yet not the less shall I next morning  
wake,  
And with a natural and fervent sigh  
Such as you never heaved, I shall exclaim  
What an unlucky dog I am! And  
here  
He broke into a laugh But as for  
you—  
You! on all hands you have the best of  
me  
Men have not robbed you of your birth-  
right—work,  
Nor ravaged in old days a peaceful field  
Nor wedded helresses against their will  
Nor sinned, nor slaved nor stooped, nor  
overreached  
That you might drone a useless life away  
Mid half a score of bleak and barren  
farms  
And half a dozen bogs."

O rare!" I cried

## *BROTHERS, AND A SERMON*

“His wrongs go nigh to make him eloquent

Now we behold how far bad actions reach !  
Because five hundred years ago a Knight  
Drove geese and beeves out of a Franklin’s yard,

Because three hundred years ago a squire—

Against her will, and for her fair estate—  
Married a very ugly, red-haired maid,

The blest inheritor of all their pelf,

While in the full enjoyment of the same,

Sighs on his own confession every day

He cracks no egg without a moral sigh,

Nor eats of beef but thinking on that wrong;

Then, yet the more to be revenged on them,

And shame their ancient pride, if they should know,

Works hard as any horse for his degree,  
And takes to writing verses ”

“Ay,” he said,  
Half laughing at himself “Yet you and I,

But for those tresses which enrich us yet  
With somewhat of the hue that partial fame

Calls auburn when it shines on heads of heirs,

## *BROTHERS AND A SERMON* .

But when it flames round brows of  
    younger sons,  
Just red—mere red why but for this I say  
And but for selfish getting of the land  
And beggarly entailing it, we two  
To-day well fed, well grown well dressed  
    well read  
We might have been two horny-handed  
    boors—  
Lean clumsy ignorant, and ragged  
    boors—  
Planning for moonlight nights a poaching  
    scheme,  
Or soiling our dull souls and consciences  
With plans for pilfering a cottage roost.

What chorus! are you dumb? you  
    should have cried  
So good comes out of evil " and with  
    that,  
As if all pauses it was natural  
To seize for songs, his voice broke out  
    again

Coo dove, to thy married mate—  
    She has two warm eggs in her nest  
Tell her the hours are few to wait  
    Ere life shall dawn on their rest;  
And thy young shall peck at the shells, elate  
    With a dream of her brooding breast.

*BROTHERS, AND A SERMON*

Coo, dove, for she counts the hours,  
Her fair wings ache for flight  
By day the apple has grown in the flowers,  
And the moon has grown by night,  
And the white drift settled from hawthorn  
bowers,  
Yet they will not seek the light

Coo, dove, but what of the sky?  
And what if the storm-wind swell,  
And the reeling branch come down from on  
high  
To the grass where daisies dwell,  
And the brood beloved should with them lie  
Or ever they break the shell?

Coo, dove, and yet black clouds lower,  
Like fate, on the far-off sea  
Thunder and wind they bear to thy bower,  
As on wings of destiny  
Ah, what if they break in an evil hour,  
As they broke over mine and me?

What next?—we started like to girls, for  
lo!  
The creaking voice, more harsh than rusty  
crane,  
Of one who stooped behind us, cried  
aloud,  
“Good luck! how sweet the gentleman  
does sing—



## BROTHERS AND A SERMON

So loud and sweet tis like to split his  
throat.

Why Mike s a child to him a two-years  
child—

A Chrisom child."

Who s Mike?" my brother growled  
A little roughly Quoth the fisherman—

Mike, Sir? he s just a fisher lad no  
more

But he can sing when he takes on to  
sing

So loud there s not a sparrow in the spire  
But needs must hear Sir if I might  
make bold

I d ask what song that was you sung  
My mate

As we were shoving off the mackerel boats  
Said he I'll wager that s the sort o song  
They kept their hearts up with in the  
Crimea. "

There, fisherman " quoth I he showed  
his wit

Your mate; he marked the sound of sa  
vage war—

Gunpowder groans hot shot, and burst  
ing shells,

And murderous messages delivered by  
Spent balls that break the heads of  
dreaming men."

## *BROTHERS, AND A SERMON*

"Ay, ay, Sir!" quoth the fisherman  
'Have done!'"

My brother And I—"The gift belongs  
to few

Of sending farther than the words can  
reach

Their spirit and expression," still—"Have  
done!"

He cried, and then, "I rolled the rubbish  
out

More loudly than the meaning warranted,  
To air my lungs—I thought not on the  
words "

Then said the fisherman, who missed the  
point,

"So Mike rolls out the psalm, you'll  
hear him, Sir,

Please God you live till Sunday "

"Even so  
And you, too, fisherman, for here, they say,  
You all are church-goers "

"Surely, Sir," quoth he,  
Took off his hat, and stroked his old  
white head

And wrinkled face, then sitting by us  
said,

As one that utters with a quiet mind  
Unchallenged truth—"Tis lucky for the  
boats "

## *BROTHERS AND A SERMON*

The boats! 'tis lucky for the boats! Our  
eyes

Were drawn to him as either fain would  
say

What! do they send the psalm up in the  
spire

And pray because 'tis lucky for the boats?

But he, the brown old man the wrinkled  
man

That all his life had been a church-goer  
Familiar with celestial cadences

Informed of all he could receive and sure  
Of all he understood—he sat content

And we kept silence. In his reverend  
face

There was a simpleness we could not  
sound

Much truth had passed him overhead;  
some error

He had trod under foot—God comfort  
him!

He could not learn of us for we were  
young

And he was old and so we gave it up  
And the sun went into the west, and down

Upon the water stooped an orange cloud,  
And the pale milky reaches flushed as

glad  
To wear its colours and the sultry air

*BROTHERS, AND A SERMON*

Went out to sea, and puffed the sails of  
ships

With thymy wafts, the breath of trodden  
grass

It took moreover music, for across  
The heather belt and over pasture land  
Came the sweet monotone of one slow bell,  
And parted time into divisions rare,  
Whereof each morsel brought its own de-  
light

“They ring for service,” quoth the fisher-  
man,

“Our parson preaches in the church to-  
night ”

“And do the people go?” my brother  
asked

“Ay, Sir, they count it mean to stay  
away,

He takes it so to heart    He’s a rare man,  
Our parson, half a head above us all ”

“That’s a great gift, and notable,” said I

“Ay, Sir, and when he was a younger  
man

He went out in the lifeboat very oft,

## *BROTHERS AND A SERMON*

Before the Grace of Sunderland was  
wrecked.

He's never been his own man since that  
hour

For there were thirty men aboard of her  
Anigh as close as you are now to me  
And neer a one was saved.

They're lying now  
With two small children in a row the  
church

And yard are full of seamen's graves, and  
few

Have any names.

She bumped upon the reef  
Our parson, my young son and several  
more

Were lashed together with a two-inch  
rope

And crept along to her their mates ashore  
Ready to haul them in. The gale was  
high

The sea was all a boiling seething froth,  
And God Almighty's guns were going  
off

And the land trembled.

When she took the ground,  
She went to pieces like a lock of hay  
Tossed from a pitchfork. Ere it came to  
that

## *BROTHERS, AND A SERMON*

The captain reeled on deck with two  
small things,  
One in each arm—his little lad and  
lass  
Their hair was long, and blew before his  
face,  
Or else we thought he had been saved,  
he fell,  
But held them fast The crew, poor  
luckless souls!  
The breakers licked them off, and some  
were crushed,  
Some swallowed in the yeast, some flung  
up dead,  
The dear breath beaten out of them not  
one  
Jumped from the wreck upon the reef to  
catch  
The hands that strained to reach, but  
tumbled back  
With eyes wide open But the captain  
lay  
And clung—the only man alive They  
prayed—  
‘For God’s sake, captain, throw the  
children here!’  
‘Throw them!’ our parson cried, and  
then she struck ‘  
And he threw one, a pretty two-years  
child,

## *BROTHERS AND A SERMON*

But the gale dashed him on the slippery  
verge  
And down he went. They say they heard  
him cry

Then he rose up and took the other one,  
And all our men reached out their hungry  
arms  
And cried out Throw her throw her!  
and he did  
He threw her right against the parson's  
breast,  
And all at once a sea broke over them  
And they that saw it from the shore have  
said  
It struck the wreck and piecemeal scat-  
tered it  
Just as a woman might the lump of salt  
That twist her hands into the kneading  
pan  
She breaks and crumbles on her rising  
bread.

We hauled our men in two of them  
were dead—  
The sea had beaten them their heads  
hung down  
Our parson's arms were empty for the  
wave  
Had torn away the pretty pretty lamb

## *BROTHERS, AND A SERMON*

We often see him stand beside her grave  
But 'twas no fault of his, no fault of his

"I ask your pardon, Sirs, I prate and  
prate,  
And never have I said what brought me  
here  
Sirs, if you want a boat to-morrow morn,  
I'm bold to say there's ne'er a boat like  
mine "

"Ay, that was what we wanted," we re-  
plied,  
"A boat, his boat," and off he went, well  
pleased

We, too, rose up (the crimson in the sky  
Flushing our faces), and went sauntering  
on,  
And thought to reach our lodging, by  
the cliff  
And up and down among the heather beds,  
And up and down between the sheaves,  
we sped,  
Doubling and winding, for a long ravine  
Ran up into the land and cut us off,  
Pushing out slippery ledges for the birds,  
And rent with many a crevice, where the  
wind



## BROTHERS AND A SERMON

Had laid up drifts of empty eggshells,  
swept  
From the bare berths of gulls and guillemots.

So as it chanced we lighted on a path  
That led into a nutwood and our talk  
Was louder than becometh if we had  
known

With argument and laughter for the  
path

As we sped onward took a sudden turn  
Abrupt and we came out on churchyard  
grass

And close upon a porch and face to face  
With those within and with the thirty  
graves.

We heard the voice of one who preached  
within,

And stopped. "Come on" my brother  
whispered me

It were more decent that we enter now  
Come on! we'll hear this rare old devil  
god

I like strong men and large I like grey  
heads

And grand gruff voices, hoarse though  
this may be

With shouting in the storm."

It was not hoarse

## *BROTHERS, AND A SERMON*

The voice that preached to those few  
fishermen  
And women, nursing mothers with the  
babes  
Hushed on their breasts, and yet it held  
them not  
Then drowsy eyes were drawn to look at  
us,  
Till, having leaned our rods against the  
wall,  
And left the dogs at watch, we entered, sat,  
And were apprised that, though he saw  
us not,  
The parson knew that he had lost the  
eyes  
And ears of those before him, for he made  
A pause—a long dead pause—and dropped  
his arms,  
And stood awaiting, till I felt the red  
Mount to my brow  
And a soft fluttering stir  
Passed over all, and every mother hushed  
The babe beneath her shawl, and he  
turned round  
And met our eyes, unused to diffidence,  
But diffident of his, then with a sigh  
Fronted the folk, lifted his grand grey  
head,  
And said, as one that pondered now the  
words

## *BROTHERS AND A SERMON*

He had been preaching on with new surprise

And found fresh marvel in their sound

Behold!

Behold! saith He I stand at the door  
and knock."

Then said the parson      What! and shall  
He wait

And must He wait, not only till we say

Good Lord the house is clean, the hearth  
is swept

The children sleep the mackerel boats  
are in

And all the nets are mended therefore I

Will slowly to the door and open it

But must He also wait where still be-  
hold!

He stands and knocks, while we do say  
Good Lord

The gentlefolk are come to worship here

And I will up and open to Thee soon

But first I pray a little longer wait

For I am taken up with them my eyes

Must needs regard the fashion of their  
clothes,

And count the gains I think to make by  
them

Forsooth they are of much account good  
Lord!

*BROTHERS, AND A*

Therefore have patience with  
dear Lord!

Or come again?"

"What! must He wait  
For this? Ay, He doth wait  
still,

Waiting for this, He, patient  
Waiting for this, e'en this  
'Behold'

I stand at the door and knock

"O f  
Knocking and waiting—knock  
night

When work is done! I charge  
the sea

Whereby you fill your children  
and by

The might of Him that maketh  
men!

I charge you, mothers! by  
milk

He drew, and by His Father,  
Blessèd for ever, that ye answer  
Open the door with shame,  
sinned,

If ye be sorry, open it with  
Albeit the place be bare for  
And comfortless for lack of peace  
Be not abashed for that, but

## *BROTHERS AND A SERMON*

And take Him in that comes to sup with  
thee

Behold! He saith I stand at the door  
and knock.

Now hear me there be troubles in this  
world

That no man can escape, and there is  
one

That lieth hard and heavy on my soul  
Concerning that which is to come —

I say  
As a man that knows what earthly  
trouble means,

I will not bear this ONE—I cannot bear  
This ONE—I cannot bear the weight of  
you—

You—every one of you, body and soul  
You, with the care you suffer and the  
loss

That you sustain you with the growing  
up

To perill maybe with the growing old  
To want, unless before I stand with you  
At the great white throne I may be free  
of all

And utter to the full what shall discharge  
Mine obligations nay I will not wait  
A day for every time the black clouds  
rise,

## *BROTHERS, AND A SERMON*

And the gale freshens, still I search my  
soul  
To find if there be aught that can per-  
suade  
To good, or aught forsooth that can  
beguile  
From evil, that I (miserable man)  
If that be so) have left unsaid, undone

“So that when any risen from sunken  
wrecks,  
Or rolled in by the billows to the edge  
Of the everlasting strand, what time the  
sea  
Gives up her dead, shall meet me, they  
may say  
Never, ‘Old man, you told us not of this,  
You left us fisher-lads that had to toil  
Ever in danger of the secret stab  
Of rocks, far deadlier than the dagger,  
winds  
Of breath more murderous than the can-  
non’s, waves  
Mighty to rock us to our death, and gulfs  
Ready beneath to suck and swallow us in  
This crime be on your head, and as for  
us—  
What shall we do?’ but rather—nay,  
not so,  
I will not think it, I will leave the dead

## *BROTHERS, AND A SERMON*

Appealing but to life I am afraid  
Of you, but not so much if you have  
sinned

As for the doubt if sin shall be forgiven.  
The day was, I have been afraid of  
pride—

Hard man's hard pride but now I am  
afraid

Of man's humility I counsel you  
By the great God's great humbleness  
and by

His pity be not humble over-much.

See! I will show at whose unopened  
doors

He stands and knocks, that you may  
never say

I am too mean too ignorant, too lost  
He knocks at other doors, but not at  
mine.

See here! it is the night! It is the  
night!

And snow lies thickly white untrodden  
snow

And the wan moon upon a casement  
shines—

A casement crusted o'er with frosted  
leaves,

That makes her ray less bright along the  
floor

## *BROTHERS, AND A SERMON*

A woman sits, with hands upon her  
knees,  
Poor tired soul! and she has nought  
to do,  
For there is neither fire nor candle light  
The driftwood ash lies cold upon her  
hearth,  
The rushlight flickered down an hour  
ago,  
Her children wail a little in their sleep  
For cold and hunger, and, as if that  
sound  
Was not enough, another comes to her,  
Over God's undefiled snow—a song—  
Nay, never hang your heads—I say,  
a song

“And doth she curse the alehouse, and  
the sots  
That drink the night out and their earn-  
ings there,  
And drink their manly strength and  
courage down,  
And drink away the little children's bread,  
And starve her, starving by the self-same  
act  
Her tender suckling, that with piteous  
eyes  
Looks in her face, till scarcely she has  
heart



## BROTHERS AND A SERMON

To work and earn the scanty bit and  
drop

That feed the others?

Does she curse the song?

I think not fishermen I have not  
heard

Such women curse. God's curse is curse  
enough.

To-morrow she will say a bitter thing  
Pulling her sleeve down lest the bruises  
show—

A bitter thing but meant for an excuse—  
My master is not worse than many  
men

But now ay now she sitteth dumb and  
still

No food no comfort, cold and poverty  
Bearing her down.

My heart is sore for her  
How long how long? When troubles  
come of God

When men are frozen out of work when  
wives

Are sick, when working fathers fail and  
die

When boats go down at sea—then nought  
behoves

Like patience but for troubles wrought  
of men

Patience is hard—I tell you it is hard.

## *BROTHERS, AND A SERMON*

“O thou poor soul! it is the night—the  
night,  
Against thy door drifts up the silent snow,  
Blocking thy threshold ‘Fall,’ thou sayest,  
‘fall, fall,  
Cold snow, and lie and be trod underfoot,  
Am not I fallen? Wake up, and pipe,  
O wind,  
Dull wind, and beat and bluster at my  
door  
Merciful wind, sing me a hoarse rough  
song,  
For there is other music made to-night  
That I would fain not hear Wake, thou  
still sea,  
Heavily plunge Shoot on, white waterfall  
O, I could long like thy cold icicles  
Freeze, freeze, and hang upon the frosty  
clift  
And not complain, so I might melt at  
last  
In the warm summer sun, as thou wilt do’

“‘But woe is me! I think there is no sun,  
My sun is sunken, and the night grows  
dark  
None care for me The children cry for  
bread,  
And I have none, and nought can com-  
fort me,

## *BROTHERS AND A SERMON*

Even if the heavens were free to such  
as I  
It were not much for death is long to  
wait  
And heaven is far to go!

And speakst thou thus  
Despairing of the sun that sets to thee,  
And of the earthly love that wanes to  
thee,  
And of the heaven that lieth far from  
thee?  
Peace, peace, fond fool! One draweth  
near thy door  
Whose footsteps leave no print across the  
snow  
Thy sun has risen with comfort in his  
face,  
The smile of heaven to warm thy frozen  
heart  
And bless with saintly hand. What! is it  
long  
To wait and far to go? Thou shalt not go  
Behold across the snow to thee He  
comes,  
Thy heaven descends, and is it long to  
wait?  
Thou shalt not wait This night this  
night He saith  
I stand at the door and knock.

## *BROTHERS, AND A SERMON*

“ It is enough—can such an one be here—  
Yea, here? O God forgive you, fisher-  
men !

One! is there only one? But do thou  
know,

O woman pale for want, if thou art here,  
That on thy lot much thought is spent  
in heaven,

And, coveting the heart a hard man broke,  
One standeth patient, watching in the  
night,

And waiting in the day-time

“ What shall be  
If thou wilt answer? He will smile on  
thee,

One smile of His shall be enough to  
heal

The wound of man's neglect, and He  
will sigh,

Pitying the trouble which that sigh shall  
cure,

And He will speak—speak in the desolate  
night,

In the dark night ‘For me a thorny  
crown

Men wove, and nails were driven in my  
hands

And feet there was an earthquake, and  
I died,

I died, and am alive for evermore

## *BROTHERS AND A SERMON*

I died for thee for thee I am alive  
And my humanity doth mourn for thee,  
For thou art mine and all thy little  
ones,

They too are mine, are mine. Behold  
the house

Is dark, but there is brightness where  
the sons

Of God are singing and behold the  
heart

Is troubled yet the nations walk in white  
They have forgotten how to weep and  
thou

Shalt also come, and I will foster thee  
And satisfy thy soul and thou shalt warn  
Thy trembling life beneath the smile of  
God.

A little while—it is a little while—

A little while and I will comfort thee

I go away but I will come again.

But hear me yet. There was a poor  
old man

Who sat and listened to the raging sea  
And heard it thunder lunging at the  
cliffs

As like to tear them down. He lay at  
night

And Lord have mercy on the lads,  
said he,

## *BROTHERS, AND A SERMON*

'That sailed at noon, though they be  
none of mine'

For when the gale gets up, and when  
the wind

Flings at the window, when it beats the  
roof,

And lulls, and stops, and rouses up  
again,

And cuts the crest clean off the plunging  
wave,

And scatters it like feathers up the field,  
Why, then I think of my two lads my  
lads

That would have worked and never let  
me want,

And never let me take the parish pay  
No, none of mine, my lads were drowned  
at sea—

My two—before the most of these were  
born

I know how sharp that cuts, since my  
poor wife

Walked up and down, and still walked  
up and down,

And I walked after, and one could not  
hear

A word the other said, for wind and sea  
That raged and beat and thundered in the  
night—

The awfulest, the longest, lightest night

## *BROTHERS AND A SERMON*

That ever parents had to spend—a moon  
That shone like daylight on the breaking  
    wave.

Ah me! and other men have lost their  
    lads,

And other women wiped their poor dead  
    mouths

And got them home and dried them in  
    the house

And seen the driftwood lie along the  
    coast

That was a tidy boat but one day back,  
And seen next tide the neighbours gather it  
To lay it on their fires.

    Ay I was strong  
And able-bodied—loved my work—but now  
I am a useless hull 'tis time I sunk  
I am in all men's way I trouble them  
I am a trouble to myself but yet  
I feel for mariners of stormy nights  
And feel for wives that watch ashore.

    Ay ay!

If I had learning I would pray the Lord  
To bring them in but I'm no scholar no  
Book learning is a world too hard for me  
But I make bold to say O Lord good  
    Lord,

I am a broken-down poor man a fool  
To speak to Thee but in the Book  
    'tis writ,

## *BROTHERS, AND A SERMON*

As I hear say from others that can read,  
How, when Thou camest, Thou didst  
    love the sea,  
And live with fisherfolk, whereby 'tis sure  
Thou knowest all the peril they go  
    through,  
And all their trouble

    “‘As for me, good Lord,  
I have no boat, I am old, too old—  
My lads are drowned, I buried my poor  
    wife,  
My little lasses died so long ago  
That mostly I forget what they were  
    like

Thou knowest, Lord, they were such little  
    ones

I know they went to Thee, but I forget  
Their faces, though I missed them sore

    “‘O Lord,  
I was a strong man, I have drawn good  
    food

And made good money out of Thy great  
    sea

But yet I cried for them at nights, and  
    now,

Although I be so old, I miss my lads,  
And there be many folk this stormy night  
Heavy with fear for theirs. Merciful Lord,  
Comfort them, save their honest boys,  
    their pride,



## *BROTHERS AND A SERMON*

And let them hear next ebb the blessedest  
Best sound—the boat keels grating on the  
sand.

I cannot pray with finer words: I know  
Nothing I have no learning cannot  
learn—

Too old, too old. They say I want for  
nought,

I have the parish pay but I am dull  
Of hearing and the fire scarce warms  
me through.

God save me—I have been a sinful man—  
And save the lives of them that still can  
work,

For they are good to me ay good to  
me.

But Lord, I am a trouble! and I sit  
And I am lonesome, and the nights are  
few

That any think to come and draw a  
chair

And sit in my poor place and talk awhile.  
Why should they come, forsooth? Only  
the wind

Knocks at my door O long and loud it  
knocks,

The only thing God made that has a  
mind

To enter in.

## *BROTHERS, AND A SERMON*

“Yea, thus the old man spake  
These were the last words of his aged  
mouth—

BUT ONE DID KNOCK One came to sup  
with him,

That humble, weak old man, knocked at  
his door

In the rough pauses of the labouring  
wind

I tell you that One knocked while it was  
dark,

Save where their foaming passion had  
made white

Those livid seething billows What He  
said

In that poor place where He did talk  
awhile,

I cannot tell but this I am assured,

That when the neighbours came the  
morrow morn,

What time the wind had bated, and the sun  
Shone on the old man's floor, they saw  
the smile

He passed away in, and they said, ‘He  
looks

As he had woke and seen the face of  
Christ,

And with that rapturous smile held out  
his arms

To come to Him !’

## BROTHERS AND A SERMON

Can such an one be here  
So old so weak so ignorant so frail?  
The Lord be good to thee thou poor  
old man  
It would be hard with thee if heaven  
were shut  
To such as have not learning! Nay nay  
nay  
He condescends to them of low estate  
To such as are despised He cometh  
down,  
Stands at the door and knocks.

Yet bear with me.  
I have a message I have more to say  
Shall sorrow win his pity and not sin—  
That burden ten times heavier to be  
borne?  
What think you? Shall the virtuous have  
His care  
Alone? O virtuous women think not  
scorn  
For you may lift your faces everywhere  
And now that it grows dusk, and I can  
see  
None though they front me straight I  
fain would tell  
A certain thing to you. I say to you  
And if it doth concern you as methinks  
It doth, then surely it concerneth all.

*BROTHERS, AND A SERMON*

I say that there was once—I say not  
here—

I say that there was once a castaway,  
And she was weeping, weeping bitterly,  
Kneeling, and crying with a heart-sick  
cry

That choked itself in sobs—‘O my good  
name’

O my good name!’ And none did hear  
her cry’

Nay, and it lightened, and the storm-  
bolts fell,

And the rain splashed upon the roof, and  
still

She, storm-tost as the storming ele-  
ments—

She cried with an exceeding bitter cry,  
‘O my good name!’ And then the  
thunder-cloud

Stooped low and burst in darkness over-  
head,

And rolled, and rocked her on her knees,  
and shook

The frail foundations of her dwelling-  
place

But she—if any neighbour had come in,  
(None did) if any neighbours had come  
in,

They might have seen her crying on her  
knees,

## *BROTHERS AND A SERMON*

And sobbing Lost lost lost! beating  
her breast—  
Her breast for ever pricked with cruel  
thorns,  
The wounds whereof could neither balm  
assuage  
Nor any patience heal—beating her brow  
Which ached it had been bent so long  
to hide  
From level eyes whose meaning was  
contempt.

O ye good women it is hard to leave  
The paths of virtue and return again.  
What if this sinner wept and none of  
you  
Comforted her? And what if she did  
strive  
To mend, and none of you believed her  
strife,  
Nor looked upon her? Mark, I do not  
say  
Though it was hard, you therefore were  
to blame  
That she had aught against you though  
your feet  
Never drew near her door But I be-  
seech  
Your patience. Once in old Jerusalem  
A woman kneeled at consecrated feet

## *BROTHERS, AND A SERMON*

Kissed them, and washed them with her  
tears

“What then?”

I think that yet our Lord is pitiful  
I think I see the castaway e'en now!  
And she is not alone the heavy rain  
Splashes without, and sullen thunder rolls,  
But she is lying at the sacred feet  
Of One transfigured

“And her tears flow down,  
Down to her lips—her lips that kiss the  
print

Of nails, and love is like to break her  
heart!

Love and repentance—for it still doth  
work

Sore in her soul to think, to think that  
she,

Even she, did pierce the sacred, sacred  
feet,

And bruise the thorn-crowned head

“O Lord, our Lord,  
How great is Thy compassion! Come,  
good Lord,

For we will open Come this night, good  
Lord,

Stand at the door and knock

“And is this all?—  
Trouble, old age and simpleness, and  
sin—

## *BROTHERS AND A SERMON*

This all? It might be all some other  
night  
But this night if a voice said Give  
account  
Whom hast thou with thee? then must  
I reply  
Young manhood have I beautiful youth  
and strength,  
Rich with all treasure drawn up from the  
crypt  
Where lies the learning of the ancient  
world—  
Brave with all thoughts that poets fling  
upon  
The strand of life, as driftweed after  
storms  
Doubtless familiar with Thy mountain  
heads,  
And the dread purity of Alpine snows  
Doubtless familiar with Thy works con-  
coaled  
For ages from mankind—outlying worlds  
And many mooned spheres—and Thy  
great store  
Of stars more thick than mealy dust  
which here  
Powders the pale leaves of Auriculas.

This do I know but Lord I know not  
more.

## *BROTHERS, AND A SERMON*

“ ‘ Not more concerning them—concerning  
Thee,  
I know Thy bounty, where Thou givest  
much  
Standing without, if any call Thee in  
Thou givest more ’ Speak, then, O rich  
and strong  
Open, O happy young, ere yet the hand  
Of him that knocks, wearied at last,  
forbear,  
The patient foot its thankless quest re-  
frain,  
The wounded heart forevermore with-  
draw ”

I have heard many speak, but this one  
man—  
So anxious not to go to heaven alone—  
This one man I remember, and his look,  
Till twilight overshadowed him He  
ceased,  
And out in darkness with the fisher folk  
We passed and stumbled over mounds of  
moss,  
And heard, but did not see, the passing  
beck  
Ah, graceless heart, would that it could  
regain  
From the dim storehouse of sensations  
past



## *BROTHERS AND A SERMON*

The impress full of tender awe that  
    night  
Which fell on me! It was as if the  
    Christ  
Had been drawn down from heaven to  
    track us home,  
And any of the footsteps following us  
Might have been His.

## A Wedding Song



Come up the broad river, the Thames,  
my Dane,

My Dane with the beautiful eyes '  
Thousands and thousands await thee full  
fain,

And talk of the wind and the skies  
Fear not from folk and from country to  
part,

O, I swear it is wisely done  
For (I said) I will bear me by thee, sweet-  
heart,

As becometh my father's son

Great London was shouting as I went  
down

"She is worthy," I said, "of this,  
What shall I give who have promised a  
crown?"

O, first I will give her a kiss "  
So I kissed her and brought her, my  
Dane, my Dane,

Through the waving wonderful crowd

## *A WEDDING SONG*

Thousands and thousands, they shouted  
amain

Like mighty thunders and loud.

And they said, He is young the lad we  
love,

The heir of the Isles is young  
How we deem of his mother and one  
gone above

Can neither be said nor sung  
He brings us a pledge—he will do his part  
With the best of his race and name"—  
And I will, for I look to live sweetheart  
As may suit with my mother's fame.

## The Four Bridges



I love this grey old church, the low, long  
nave,

The ivied chancel and the slender spire,  
No less its shadow on each heaving grave,  
With growing osier bound, or living  
briar,

I love those yew-tree trunks, where stand  
arrayed

So many deep-cut names of youth and  
maid

A simple custom this—I love it well—

A carved betrothal and a pledge of truth,  
How many an eve, their linked names to  
spell,

Beneath the yew-trees sat our village  
youth<sup>1</sup>

When work was over, and the new-cut  
hay

Sent wafts of balm from meadows where  
it lay

## THE FOUR BRIDGES

Ah! many an eve, while I was yet a boy  
Some village hind has beckoned me  
aside,  
And sought mine aid, with shy and awkward joy  
To carve the letters of his rustic bride  
And make them clear to read as graven  
stone  
Deep in the yew-tree's trunk beside his  
own.

For none could carve like me and here  
they stand  
Fathers and mothers of this present race  
And underscored by some less practised  
hand  
That fain the story of its line would  
trace,  
With children's names and number and  
the day  
When any called to God have passed  
away

I look upon them and I turn aside  
As oft when carving them I did ere-  
while  
And there I see those wooden bridges wide  
That cross the marshy hollow there  
the stile

## *THE FOUR BRIDGES*

In reeds imbedded, and the swelling down,  
And the white road toward the distant  
town

But those old bridges claim another look  
Our bratling river tumbles through the  
one,

The second spans a shallow, weedy brook,  
Beneath the others, and beneath the sun,  
Lie two long stilly pools, and on their  
breasts

Picture their wooden piles, encased in  
swallows' nests

And round about them grows a fringe of  
reeds,

And then a floating crown of lily flowers,  
And yet within small silver-budded weeds,  
But each clear centre evermore em-  
bowers

A deeper sky, where, stooping, you may  
see

The little minnows darting restlessly

My heart is bitter, lilies, at your sweet,  
Why did the dewdrop fringe your  
chalices?

Why in your beauty are you thus com-  
plete,

You silver ships—you floating palaces?

## THE FOUR BRIDGES

O! if need be, you must allure man's  
eye,  
Yet wherefore blossom here? O why? O  
why?

O! O! the world is wide, you lily flowers,  
It hath warm forests cleft by stillly  
pools,  
Where every night bathe crowds of stars  
and bowers  
Of spicery hang over Sweet air cools  
And shakes the lilies among those stars  
that lie  
Why are not ye content to reign there?  
Why?

That chain of bridges, it were hard to tell  
How it is linked with all my early joy  
There was a little foot that I loved well  
It danced across them when I was a  
boy  
There was a careless voice that used to  
sing  
There was a child a sweet and happy  
thing

Oft through that matted wood of oak and  
birch  
She came from yonder house upon the  
hill

## THE FOUR BRIDGES

She crossed the wooden bridges to the  
church,

And watched, with village girls, my  
boasted skill

But loved to watch the floating lilies best,  
Or linger, peering in a swallow's nest,

Linger and linger, with her wistful eyes  
Drawn to the lily-buds that lay so white  
And soft on crimson water, for the skies  
Would crimson, and the little cloudlets  
bright

Would all be flung among the flowers  
sheer down,

To flush the spaces of their clustering crown

★

Till the green rushes—O, so glossy green—  
The rushes, they would whisper, rustle,  
shake,

And forth on floating gauze, no jewelled  
queen

So rich, the green-eyed dragon-flies  
would break,

And hover on the flowers—aërial things,  
With little rainbows flickering on their  
wings

Ah! my heart dear! the polished pools lie  
still,

Like lanes of water reddened by the west,



## THE FOUR BRIDGES

Till swooping down from yon overhang  
ing hill  
The bold marsh harrier wets her tawny  
breast  
We scared her oft in childhood from her  
prey  
And the old eager thoughts rise fresh as  
yesterday

To yonder copse by moonlight I did go  
In luxury of mischief half afraid,  
To steal the great owl's brood, her downy  
snow  
Her screaming imps to seize the while  
she preyed  
With yellow cruel eyes, whose radiant  
glare  
Fell with their mother rage, I might not  
dare.

Panting I lay till her great fanning wings  
Troubled the dreams of rock-doves  
slumbering nigh  
And she and her fierce mate like evil  
things  
Skimmed the dusk fields then rising  
with a cry  
Of fear joy triumph, darted on my prey  
And tore it from the nest and fled away

## THE FOUR BRIDGES

But afterward, belated in the wood,  
I saw her moping on the rifled tree,  
And my heart smote me for her, while I  
stood

Awakened from my careless reverie,  
So white she looked, with moonlight  
round her shed,  
So motherlike she drooped and hung her  
head

O that mine eyes would cheat me! I  
behold

The godwits running by the water edge,  
The mossy bridges mirrored as of old,  
The little curlews creeping from the  
sedge,

But not the little foot so gaily light  
O that mine eyes would cheat me, that I  
might!—

Would cheat me! I behold the gable ends—  
Those purple pigeons clustering on the  
cote,

The lane with maples overhung, that bends  
Toward her dwelling, the dry grassy  
moat,

Thick mullions, diamond latticed, mossed  
and grey,

And walls banked up with laurel and with  
bay

## THE FOUR BRIDGES

And up behind them yellow fields of corn  
And still ascending countless fiery spires,  
Dry slopes of hills uncultured bare for  
lorn  
And green in rocky clefts with whins  
and briars  
Then rich cloud masses dyed the violet's  
hue  
With orange sunbeams dropping swiftly  
through.

Ay I behold all this full easily  
My soul is jealous of my happier eyes,  
And manhood envies youth. Ah strange  
to see  
By looking merely orange flooded skies  
Nay any dewdrop that may near me  
shine:  
But never more the face of Eglantine!

She was my one companion being her  
self  
The jewel and adornment of my days,  
My life's completeness. O a smiling elf  
That I do but disparage with my praise—  
My playmate and I loved her dearly and  
long  
And she loved me as the tender love the  
strong

## THE FOUR BRIDGES

Ay, but she grew, till on a time there  
came

A sudden restless yearning to my heart,  
And as we went a-nesting, all for shame  
And shyness, I did hold my peace, and  
start,  
Content departed, comfort shut me out,  
And there was nothing left to talk about

She had but sixteen years, and as for me,  
Four added made my life This pretty  
bird,

This fairy bird that I had cherished—she,  
Content, had sung, while I, contented,  
heard

The song had ceased, the bird, with  
nature's art,  
Had brought a thorn and set it in my heart

The restless birth of love my soul opprest,  
I longed and wrestled for a tranquil day,  
And warred with that disquiet in my breast  
As one who knows there is a better way,  
But, turned against myself, I still in vain  
Looked for the ancient calm to come again

My tired soul could to itself confess  
That she deserved a wiser love than  
mine,

## THE FOUR BRIDGES

To love more truly were to love her less  
And for this truth I still awoke to pine  
I had a dim belief that it would be  
A better thing for her a blessed thing  
for me.

Good hast Thou made them—comforters  
right sweet;  
Good hast Thou made the world, to  
mankind lent  
Good are Thy dropping clouds that feed  
the wheat  
Good are Thy stars above the firma  
ment.  
Take to Thee, take, Thy worship Thy  
reown;  
The good which Thou hast made doth  
wear Thy crown.

For O my God, Thy creatures are so  
frail  
Thy bountiful creation is so fair  
That, drawn before us like the temple veil,  
It hides the Holy Place from thought  
and care,  
Giving man's eyes instead its sweeping  
fold  
Rich as with cherub wings and apples  
wrought of gold,

## THE FOUR BRIDGES

Purple and blue and scarlet—shimmering  
bells

And rare pomegranates on its brodered  
rim,

Glorious with chain- and fret-work that  
the swell

Of incense shakes to music dreamy and  
dim,

Till on a day comes loss, that God makes  
gain,

And death and darkness rend the veil in  
twain

Ah, sweetest' my beloved' each outward  
thing

Recalls my youth, and is instinct with  
thee,

Brown wood-owls in the dusk, with noise-  
less wing,

Float from yon hanger to their haunted  
tree,

And hoot full softly    Listening, I regain  
A flashing thought of thee with their  
remembered strain

I will not pine—it is the careless brook,  
These amber sunbeams slanting down  
the vale,

## THE FOUR BRIDGES

It is the long tree-shadows, with their look  
Of natural peace, that make my heart  
to fail

The peace of nature—No I will not pine—  
But O the contrast twixt her face and  
mine!

And still I changed—I was a boy no  
more

My heart was large enough to hold my  
kind,

And all the world As hath been oft before  
With youth I sought, but I could never  
find

Work hard enough to quiet my self-strife,  
And use the strength of action-craving life.

She too, was changed her bountiful sweet  
eyes

Looked out full lovingly on all the world.

O tender as the deeps in yonder skies

Their beaming! but her rosebud lips  
were curled

With the soft dimple of a musing smile,  
Which kept my gaze, but held me mute  
the while.

A cast of bees a slowly moving wain

The scent of bean flowers wafted up a  
dell

## THE FOUR BRIDGES

Blue pigeons wheeling over fields of grain,  
Or bleat of folded lamb, would please  
her well,  
Or cooing of the early coted dove,—  
She sauntering mused of these, I, follow-  
ing, mused of love

With her two lips, that one the other  
pressed  
So poutingly with such a tranquil air,  
With her two eyes, that on my own  
would rest  
So dream-like, she denied my silent  
prayer,  
Fronted unuttered words and said them  
nay,  
And smiled down love till it had nought  
to say

The words that through mine eyes would  
clearly shine  
Hovered and hovered on my lips in  
vain,  
If after pause I said but "Eglantine",  
She raised to me her quiet eyelids twain,  
And looked me this reply—look calm, yet  
bland—  
"I shall not know, I will not under-  
stand "



## THE FOUR BRIDGES

Yet she did know my story—knew my  
life

Was wrought to hers with bindings  
many and strong

That I like Israel served for a wife

And for the love I bare her thought  
not long

But only a few days, full quickly told

My seven years service strict as his of  
old.

I must be brief the twilight shadows  
grow

And steal the rose-bloom genial summer  
sheds,

And scented wafts of wind that come and  
go

Have lifted dew from honied clover  
heads

The seven stars shine but above the mill

The dark delightful woods lie veiled  
and still.

Hush! hush! the nightingale begins to  
sing

And stops, as ill-contented with her note

Then breaks from out the bush with  
hurried wing

Restless and passionate She tunes her  
throat

## *THE FOUR BRIDGES*

Laments awhile in wavering trills, and  
then  
Floods with a stream of sweetness all the  
glen

The seven stars upon the nearest pool  
Lie trembling down betwixt the lily  
leaves,  
And move like glowworms, wafting  
breezes cool  
Come down along the water, and it  
heaves  
And bubbles in the sedge, while deep  
and wide  
The dim night settles on the country side

I know this scene by heart O! once be-  
fore  
I saw the seven stars float to and fro,  
And stayed my hurried footsteps by the  
shore  
To mark the starry picture spread below  
Its silence made the tumult in my breast  
More audible, its peace revealed my own  
unrest.

I paused, then hurried on, my heart beat  
quick,  
I crossed the bridges, reached the steep  
ascent,

## THE FOUR BRIDGES

And climbed through matted fern and  
hazels thick

Then darkling through the close green  
maples went

And saw—there felt love's keenest pangs  
begin—

An oriel window lighted from within—

I saw—and felt that they were scarcely  
cares

Which I had known before I drew  
more near

And O! methought how sore it frets and  
wears

The soul to part with that it holds so  
dear

'Tis hard two woven tendrils to untwine  
And I was come to part with Eglantine.

For life was bitter through those words  
repressed

And youth was burdened with unspoken  
vows

Love unrequited brooded in my breast

And shrank, at glance, from the be-  
loved brows:

And three long months, heart sick, my  
foot withdraw'n

I had not sought her side by rivulet  
copse, or lawn—

## THE FOUR BRIDGES

Not ought her self, yet bring the light and  
be

Still followed in her wake though far  
behind,

And I, being parted from her loveliness,  
Looked at the picture of her in my  
mind

I lived alone I talked with cool opulence  
And ever longed for her, and signed the  
result

Then I had risen to struggle with my  
heart,

And said—'O heart! the world is fresh  
and true,

And I am young, but this the real  
matter

Changes to but rises the morning air  
I will, I must, these weary letters break—  
I will be free, if only for her sake

"O let me trouble her no more with night!  
Heart-healing comes by distance, and  
with time

Then let me wander, and enrich mine eyes  
With the green forests or a softer clime,  
Or list by night at sea the wind's low  
swoon

And long monotonous rockings of the  
wave

## THE FOUR BRIDGES

Through open solitudes unbounded  
meads  
Where, wading on breast-high in yellow  
bloom,  
Untamed of man the shy white llama  
feeds—  
There would I journey and forget my  
doom  
Or far O far as sunrise I would see  
The level prairie stretch away from me!

Or I would sail upon the tropic seas,  
Where fathom long the blood-red dulces  
grow  
Droop from the rock and waver in the  
breeze,  
Lashing the tide to foam while calm  
below  
The muddy mandrakes throng those waters  
warm,  
And purple gold, and green the living  
blossoms swarm."

So of my father I did win consent,  
With importunities repeated long  
To make that duty which had been my  
bent,  
To dig with strangers alien tombs  
among



## THE FOUR BRIDGES

I let the last day wane the dusk began  
Ere I had sought that window lighted  
from within.

Sinking and sinking O my heart! my  
heart!

Will absence heal thee whom its shade  
doth rend?

I reached the little gate and lo! within  
The one! tell her shadow She did lend  
Her loveliness to me and let me share  
The listless sweetness of those features fair

Among thick laurels in the gathering  
gloom

Heavy for this our parting I did stand  
Beside her mother in the lighted room

She sitting, leaned her cheek upon her  
hand

And as she read her sweet voice floating  
through

The open casement seemed to mourn me  
an adieu.

Youth! youth! how buoyant are thy hopes!  
they turn

Like marigolds, toward the sunny side.  
My hopes were buried in a funeral urn

And they sprang up like plants and  
spread them wide;

## THE FOUR BRIDGES

Though I had schooled and reasoned  
    them away,  
They gathered smiling near and prayed a  
    holiday

Ah, sweetest voice! how pensive were its  
    tones,

And how regretful its unconscious pause!  
"Is it for me her heart this sadness owns,  
And is our parting of to-night the cause?"  
Ah, would it might be so!" I thought,  
    and stood

Listening entranced among the under-  
    wood

I thought it would be something worth  
    the pain

Of parting, to look once in those deep  
    eyes,

And take from them an answering look  
    again

"When eastern palms," I thought,  
    "about me rise,

If I might carve our names upon the rind,  
Betrothed, I would not mourn, though  
    leaving thee behind"

I can be patient, faithful, and most fond  
    To unacknowledged love, I can be true



## THE FOUR BRIDGES

To this sweet thralldom this unequal bond,  
This yoke of mine that reaches not to  
you  
O how much more could costly parting  
buy—  
If not a pledge, one kiss, or failing that,  
a sigh!

I listened and she ceased to read she  
turned  
Her face toward the laurels where I  
stood  
Her mother spoke—O wonder! hardly  
learned  
She said There is a rustling in the  
wood  
Ah child! if one draw near to bid fare  
well  
Let not thine eyes an unsought secret tell.

My daughter there is nothing held so  
dear  
As love, if only it be hard to win.  
The roses that in yonder hedge appear  
Outdo our garden-buds which bloom  
within  
But since the hand may pluck them every  
day  
Unmarked they bud, bloom drop and  
drift away

## THE FOUR BRIDGES

“My daughter, my beloved, be not you  
Like those same roses” O bewildering word!

My heart stood still, a mist obscured my  
view

It cleared, still silence No denial  
stirred

The lips beloved, but straight, as one  
opprest,

She, kneeling, dropped her face upon her  
mother's breast

This said, “My daughter, sorrow comes  
to all,

Our life is checked with shadows manifold

But woman has this more—she may not  
call

Her sorrow by its name Yet love not  
told,

And only born of absence and by thought,  
With thought and absence may return to  
nought”

And my beloved lifted up her face,

And moved her lips as if about to speak,  
She dropped her lashes with a girlish  
grace,

And the rich damask mantled in her  
cheek

## THE FOUR BRIDGES

I stood awaiting till she should deny  
Her love, or with sweet laughter put it  
by

But closer nestling to her mother's heart  
She, blushing said no word to break  
my trance,  
For I was breathless and with lips apart  
Felt my breast pant and all my pulses  
dance,  
And strove to move, but could not for the  
weight  
Of unbelieving joy so sudden and so  
great,

Because she loved me. With a mighty  
sigh  
Breaking away I left her on her knees  
And blest the laurel bower the darkened  
sky  
The sultry night of August. Through  
the trees,  
Giddy with gladness to the porch I went  
And hardly found the way for joyful won-  
derment.

Yet when I entered saw her mother sit  
With both hands cherishing the grace-  
ful head

## THE FOUR BRIDGES

Smoothing the clustered hair, and parting  
it

From the fair brow, she, rising, only  
said,

In the accustomed tone, the accustomed  
word,

The careless greeting that I always heard,

And she resumed her merry, mocking  
smile,

Though tear-drops on the glistening  
lashes hung

O woman! thou wert fashioned to be-  
guile

So have all sages said, all poets sung  
She spoke of favouring winds and wait-  
ing ships,

With smiles of gratulation on her lips!

And then she looked and faltered I had  
grown

So suddenly in life and soul a man  
She moved her lips, but could not find a  
tone

To set her mocking music to, began  
One struggle for dominion, raised her  
eyes,

And straight withdrew them hachful  
through surprise

## THE FOUR BRIDGES

The colour over cheek and bosom flushed  
I might have heard the beating of her  
heart,

But that mine own beat louder when she  
blushed,

The hand within mine own I felt to  
start,

But would not change my pitiless decree  
To strive with her for might and mastery

She looked again as one that, half afraid,  
Would fain be certain of a doubtful  
thing

Or one beseeching "Do not me upbraid!"  
And then she trembled like the flutter  
ing

Of timid little birds and silent stood  
No smile wherewith to mock my hardi-  
hood.

She turned, and to an open casement  
moved

With girlish shyness mute beneath my  
gaze,

And I on downcast lashes unproved  
Could look as long as pleased me  
while the rays

Of moonlight round her she her fair  
head bent,

In modest silence to my words attent.

## *THE FOUR BRIDGES*

How fast the giddy whirling moments  
flew!

The moon had set, I heard the mid-  
night chime,

Hope is more brave than fear, and joy  
than dread,

And I could wait unmoved the parting  
time

It came, for by a sudden impulse drawn,  
She, risen, stepped out upon the dusky  
lawn

A little waxen taper in her hand,

Her feet upon the dry and dewless grass,  
She looked like one of the celestial band,  
Only that on her cheeks did dawn and  
pass

Most human blushes, while, the soft light  
thrown

On vesture pure and white, she seemed  
yet fairer grown

Her mother, looking out toward her,  
sighed,

Then gave her hand in token of fare-  
well,

And with her warning eyes, that seemed  
to chide,

Scarce suffered that I sought her child  
to tell

## THE FOUR BRIDGES

The story of my life whose every line  
No other burden bore than—Eglantine.

Black thunder-clouds were rising up be  
hind

The waxen taper burned full steadily  
It seemed as if dark midnight had a  
mind

To hear what lovers say and her decree  
Had passed for silence, while she, dropped  
to ground

With raiment floating wide, drank in the  
sound.

O happiness! thou dost not leave a trace  
So well defined as sorrow Amber light,  
Shed like a glory on her angel face,

I can remember fully and the sight  
Of her fair forehead and her shining eyes  
And lips that smiled in sweet and girlish  
wise.

I can remember how the taper played  
Over her small hands and her vesture  
white

How it struck up into the trees and laid  
Upon their under leaves unwonted light  
And when she<sup>9</sup> held it low how far it  
spread

O'er velvet pansies slumbering on their bed.

## THE FOUR BRIDGES

I can remember that we spoke full low,  
That neither doubted of the other's  
truth,

And that with footsteps slower and more  
slow,

Hands folded close for love, eyes wet  
for ruth

Beneath the trees, by that clear taper's  
flame,

We wandered till the gate of parting came

But I forget the parting words she said,  
So much they thrilled the all-attentive  
soul,

For one short moment human heart and  
head

May bear such bliss—its present is the  
whole

I had that present, till in whispers fell  
With parting gesture her subdued fare-  
well

Farewell! she said, in act to turn away,  
But stood a moment still to dry her  
tears,

And suffered my enfolding arm to stay

The time of her departure O ye years  
That intervene betwixt that day and this!  
You all received your hue from that keen  
pain and bliss



# THE FOLK OF THE

O I would go and see O go to  
to see

At a great distance and I go to  
to see the great and the great

The great, the great of all the great and  
the great

It is time to go and see the great and  
the great

O I go to see again and make the  
the great

I go to see O I cannot more really  
that I will make my trouble the great  
to see

With a long over journey and wide and  
and

O I go to see of the great and the great  
and the great and the great and the great  
way

With a long and a long and the great  
and the great

I go to see and the great and the great  
and the great

With a long and the great and the great  
and the great

I go to see and the great and the great  
and the great and the great and the great  
and the great

## THE FOUR BRIDGES

Unseen above, while comely shepherds  
pass,  
And scarcely show their heads above the  
grass

—The red Sahara in an angry glow,  
With amber fogs, across its hollows  
trailed

Long strings of camels, gloomy-eyed and  
slow,

And women on their necks, from gazers  
veiled,

And sun-swarth guides who toil across the  
sand

To groves of date-trees on the watered land

Again—the brown sails of an Arab boat,

Flapping by night upon a glassy sea,  
Whereon the moon and planets seem to  
float,

More bright of hue than they were wont  
to be,

While shooting-stars rain down with  
crackling sound,

And, thick as swarming locusts, drop to  
ground

Or far into the heat among the sands

The gem-brook nations, snuffing up the  
wind,



## THE FOUR BRIDGES

Therefore let memory turn again to home,  
Feel, as of old, the joy of drawing near,  
Watch the green breakers and the wind-  
tossed foam,  
And see the land-fog break, dissolve,  
and clear,  
Then think a skylark's voice far sweeter  
sound  
Than ever thrilled but over English  
ground,

And walk, glad, even to tears, among  
the wheat,  
Not doubting this to be the first of lands,  
And, while in foreign words this mur-  
muring, meet  
Some little village schoolgirls (with  
their hands  
Full of forget-me-nots), who greeting me,  
I count their English talk delightful  
melody,

And seat me on a bank, and draw them  
near,  
That I may feast myself with hearing  
it,  
Till shortly they forget their bashful fear,  
Push back their flaxen curls, and round  
me sit—



## THE FOUR BRIDGES

And "Ah!" methought, "how sweetly  
did it fall,  
Though but in dream, upon the listen-  
ing ear!  
How sweet from other lips the name well  
known—  
That name, so many a year heard only  
from mine own!"

I thought awhile, then slumber came to  
me,  
And tangled all my fancy in her maze,  
And I was drifting on a raft at sea,  
The near all ocean, and the far all  
haze,  
Through the white polished water sharks  
did glide,  
And up in heaven I saw no stars to guide  
"Have mercy, God!" but lo! my raft up-  
rose,  
Drip, drip, I heard the water splash  
from it,  
My raft had wings, and as the petrel goes,  
It skimmed the sea, then brooding  
seemed to sit  
The milk-white mirror, till, with sudden  
spring,  
It flew straight upward like a living  
thing

## THE FOUR BRIDGES

But strange!—I went not also in that  
flight,

For I was entering at a cavern's mouth  
Trees grew within, and screaming birds  
of night

Sat on them, hiding from the torrid  
south.

On on I went, while gleaming in the  
dark

Those trees with blanched leaves stood  
pale and stark.

The trees had flower-buds nourished in  
deep night

And suddenly as I went farther in  
They opened and they shot out lambent  
light

Then all at once arose a railing din  
That frightened me "It is the ghosts" I  
said,

And they are railing for their darkness  
fled.

I hope they will not look me in the face;  
It frighteth me to hear their laughter  
loud "

I saw them troop before with jaunty pace  
And one would shake off dust that soiled  
her shroud

## THE FOUR BRIDGES

But now, O joy unhopèd' to calm my  
dread,  
Some moonlight filtered through a cleft  
o'erhead

I climbed the lofty trees—the blanchèd  
trees—

The cleft was wide enough to let me  
through,

I clambered out and felt the balmy breeze,  
And stepped on churchyard grasses wet  
with dew

O happy chance! O fortune to admire!  
I stood beside my own loved village spire

And as I gazed upon the yew-tree's trunk,  
Lo, far off music—music in the night!  
So sweet and tender as it swelled and  
sunk,

It charmed me till I wept with keen  
delight,

And in my dream, methought as it drew  
near

The very clouds in heaven stooped low to  
hear

Beat high, beat low, wild heart so deeply  
stirred,

For high as heaven runs up the piercing  
strain,



## THE FOUR BRIDGES

The restless music fluttering like a bird  
Bemoaned herself and dropped to earth  
again,  
Heaping up sweetness till I was afraid  
That I should die of grief when it did  
fade.

And it DID fade but while with eager ear  
I drank its last long echo dying away  
I was aware of footsteps that drew near  
And round the ivied chancel seemed to  
stray  
O soft above the hallowed place they trod—  
Soft as the fall of foot that is not shod!

I turned—'twas even so—yes, Eglantine!  
For at the first I had divined the same  
I saw the moon on her shut eyelids shine  
And said "She is asleep" still on she  
came  
Then on her dimpled feet, I saw it gleam  
And thought— "I know that this is but  
a dream."

My darling! O my darling! not the less  
My dream went on because I knew it  
such  
She came towards me in her loveliness—  
A thing too pure, methought for mor-  
tal touch;

## THE FOUR BRIDGES

The rippling gold did on her bosom meet,  
The long white robe descended to her feet

The fringed lids dropped low, as sleep-  
oppressed,

Her dreamy smile was very fair to see,  
And her two hands were folded to her  
breast,

With somewhat held between them heed-  
fully

O fast asleep! and yet methought she  
knew

And felt my nearness those shut eyelids  
through

She sighed my tears ran down for tender-  
ness—

“And have I drawn thee to me in my  
sleep?

Is it for me thou wanderest shelterless,  
Wetting thy steps in dewy grasses  
deep?

O if this be!” I said—“yet speak to me,  
I blame my very dream for cruelty ”

Then from her stainless bosom she did  
take

Two beauteous lily flowers that lay  
therein,

## THE FOUR BRIDGES

And with slow-moving lips a gesture make  
As one that some forgotten words doth  
win

"They floated on the pool" methought  
she said

And water trickled from each lily's head.

It dropped upon her feet—I saw it gleam  
Along the ripples of her yellow hair

And stood apart, for only in a dream

She would have come methought to  
meet me there.

She spoke again— Ah fair! ah fresh they  
shine!

And there are many left, and these are  
mine."

I answered her with flattering accents  
meet—

Love they are whitest lilies e'er were  
blown."

And sayest thou so?" she sighed in  
murmurs sweet;

I have nought else to give thee now  
mine own!

For it is night. Then take them love!"  
said she

They have been costly flowers to thee—  
and me."

## THE FOUR BRIDGES

While thus she said I took them from  
her hand,  
And, overcome with love and nearness,  
woke,  
And overcome with ruth that she should  
stand  
Barefooted on the grass, that, when she  
spoke,  
Her mystic words should take so sweet a  
tone,  
And of all names her lips should choose  
"My own"

I rose, I journeyed, neared my home, and  
soon  
Beheld the spire peer out above the hill  
It was a sunny harvest afternoon,  
When by the churchyard wicket, stand-  
ing still,  
I cast my eager eyes abroad to know  
If change had touched the scenes of long  
ago

I looked across the hollow, sunbeams  
shone  
Upon the old house with the gable ends  
"Save that the laurel-trees are taller  
grown,  
No change," methought, "to its grey  
wall extends

## THE FOUR BRIDGES

What clear bright beams on yonder lattice  
shineth

There did I sometime talk with Eglantine."

There standing with my very goal in sight,  
Over my haste did sudden quiet steal  
I thought to dally with my own delight,  
Nor rush on headlong to my garnered  
weal

But taste the sweetness of a short delay  
And for a little moment hold the bliss at  
bay

The church was open it perchance might  
be

That there to offer thanks I might essay  
Or rather as I think, that I might see

The place where Eglantine was wont to  
pray

But so it was I crossed that portal wide,  
And felt my riot joy to calm subside.

The low depending curtains, gently swayed  
Cast over arch and roof a crimson glow  
But, nevertheless, all silence and all shade  
It seemed, save only for the rippling  
flow

## THE FOUR BRIDGES

Of their long foldings, when the sunset  
    air  
Sighed through the casements of the house  
    of prayer

I found her place, the ancient oaken stall,  
    Where in her childhood I had seen her  
    sit,  
Most saint-like and most tranquil there  
    of all,  
Folding her hands, as if a dreaming fit—  
A heavenly vision had before her strayed  
Of the Eternal Child in lowly manger  
    laid

I saw her prayer-book laid upon the seat,  
    And took it in my hand, and felt more  
    near  
In fancy to her, finding it most sweet  
    To think how very oft, low kneeling  
    there,  
In her devout thoughts she had let me  
    share,  
And set my graceless name in her pure  
    prayer

My eyes were dazzled with delightful  
    tears—  
In sooth they were the last I ever shed,

## THE FOUR BRIDGES

For with them fell the cherished dream:  
of years,

I looked and on the wall above my  
head,

Over her seat there was a tablet placed  
With one word only on the marble traced.—

Ah well! I would not overstate that woe

For I have had some blessings, little  
care

But since the falling of that heavy blow

God's earth has never seemed to me so  
fair

Nor any of His creatures so divine,

Nor sleep so sweet—the word was—

EGLANTINE

A Mother  
Showing the  
Portrait of  
Her Child



( F M L )

Living child or pictured cherub  
Ne'er o'ermatched its baby grace,  
And the mother, moving nearer,  
Looked it calmly in the face,  
Then with slight and quiet gesture,  
And with lips that scarcely smiled,  
Said—"A portrait of my daughter  
When she was a child "

Easy thought was hers to fathom,  
Nothing hard her glance to read,  
For it seemed to say, "No praises  
For this little child I need  
If you see, I see far better,  
And I will not feign to care  
For a stranger's prompt assurance  
That the face is fair "



## HER CHILD'S PORTRAIT

Softly clasped and half extended  
She her dimpled hands doth lay  
So they doubtless placed them, saying—  
    "Little one, you must not play"  
And while yet his work was growing  
This the painter's hand hath shown,  
That the little heart was making  
    Pictures of its own.

Is it warm in that green valley  
Vale of childhood where you dwell?  
Is it calm in that green valley  
Round whose bournes such great hills  
    swell?  
Are there giants in the valley—  
    Giants leaving footprints yet?  
Are there angels in the valley?  
    Tell me—I forget.

Answer answer for the lilies,  
    Little one, o'er top you much  
And the mealy gold within them  
    You can scarcely reach to touch;  
O how far their aspect differs,  
    Looking up and looking down!  
You, look up in that green valley—  
    Valley of renown.

Are there voices in the valley  
Lying near the heavenly gate?

## HER CHILD'S PORTRAIT

When it opens, do the harp-strings,  
Touched within, reverberate?  
When, like shooting-stars, the angels  
To your couch at nightfall go,  
Are their swift wings heard to rustle?  
Tell me! for you know

Yes, you know, and you are silent,  
Not a word shall asking win,  
Little mouth more sweet than rosebud,  
Fast it locks the secret in  
Not a glimpse upon your present  
You unfold to glad my view,  
Ah, what secrets of your future  
I could tell to you!

Sunny present! thus I read it,  
By remembrance of my past —  
Its to-day and its to-morrow  
Are as lifetimes vague and vast,  
And each face in that green valley  
Takes for you an aspect mild,  
And each voice grows soft in saying—  
“Kiss me, little child!”

As a boon the kiss is granted  
Baby mouth, your touch is sweet,  
Takes the love without the trouble  
From those lips that with it meet,

## HER CHILD'S PORTRAIT

Gives the love, O pure! O tender!  
Of the valley where it grows  
But the baby heart receiveth  
MORE THAN IT BESTOWS.

Comes the future to the present—  
Ah!" she saith, too blithe of mood  
Why that smile which seems to whisper—  
I am happy God is good ?  
God is good that truth eternal  
Sown for you in happier years,  
I must tend it in my shadow  
Water it with tears.

Ah sweet present! I must lead thee  
By a daylight more subdued  
There must teach thee low to whisper—  
I am mournful, God is good! "  
Peace, thou future! clouds are coming  
Stooping from the mountain crest  
But that sunshine floods the valley  
Let her—let her rest.

Comes the future to the present—  
Child," she saith and wilt thou  
rest?  
How long child, before thy footsteps  
Fret to reach yon cloudy crest?  
Ah, the valley!—angels guard it  
But the heights are brave to see;

## HER CHILD'S PORTRAIT

Looking down were long contentment  
Come up, child, to me "

So she speaks, but do not heed her,  
Little maid with wondrous eyes,  
Not afraid, but clear and tender,  
Blue, and filled with prophecies,  
Thou for whom life's veil unlifted  
Hangs, whom warmest valleys fold,  
Lift the veil, the charm dissolveth—  
Climb, but heights are cold

There are buds that fold within them,  
Closed and covered from our sight,  
Many a richly-tinted petal,  
Never looked on by the light  
Fain to see their shrouded faces,  
Sun and dew are long at strife,  
Till at length the sweet buds open—  
Such a bud is life

When the rose of thine own being  
Shall reveal its central fold,  
Thou shalt look within and marvel,  
Fearing what thine eyes behold,  
What it shows and what it teaches  
Are not things wherewith to part,  
Thorny rose' that always costeth  
Beatings at the heart

## HER CHILD'S PORTRAIT

Look in fear for there is dimness  
    Ills unshapen float anigh.  
Look in awe for this same nature  
    Once the Godhead deligned to die.  
Look in love, for He doth love it  
    And its tale is best of lore  
Still humanity grows dearer  
    Being learned the more.

Learn but not the less bethink thee  
    How that all can mingle tears  
But this joy can none discover  
    Save to them that are his peers  
And that they whose lips do utter  
    Language such as bards have sung—  
Lo! their speech shall be to many  
    As an unknown tongue.

Learn that if to thee the meaning  
    Of all other eyes be shown  
Fewer eyes can ever front thee  
    That are skilled to read thine own  
And that if thy love's deep current  
    Many another's far outflows,  
Then thy heart must take for ever  
    LESS THAN IT BESTOWS.

## Strife and Peace

WRITTEN FOR "THE  
PORTFOLIO SOCIETY",  
OCTOBER, 1861

The yellow poplar leaves came down  
And like a carpet lay,  
No waftings were in the sunny air  
To flutter them away,  
And he stepped on blithe and debonair  
That warm October day

"The boy," saith he, "hath got his own,  
But sore has been the fight,  
For ere his life began the strife  
That ceased but yesternight,  
For the will," he said, "the kinsfolk read,  
And read it not aright

"His cause was argued in the court  
Before his christening day,  
And counsel was heard, and judge de-  
murred,  
And bitter waxed the fray,

## STRIFE AND PEACE

Brother with brother spake no word  
When they met in the way

Against each one did each contend,  
And all against the heir  
I would not bend, for I knew the end—  
I have it for my share  
And nought repent, though my first friend  
From henceforth I must spare.

Manor and moor and farm and wold  
Their greed begrudged him sore  
And parchments old with passionate hold  
They guarded heretofore  
And they carped at signature and seal  
But they may carp no more.

An old affront will stir the heart  
Through years of rankling pain  
And I feel the fret that urged me yet  
That warfare to maintain  
For an enemy's loss may well be set  
Above an infant's gain.

An enemy's loss I go to prove  
Laugh out, thou little heir!  
Laugh in his face who vowed to chase  
Thee from thy birthright fair  
For I come to set thee in thy place  
Laugh out, and do not spare.

## STRIFE AND PEACE

A man of strife, in wrathful mood  
He neared the nurse's door,  
With poplar leaves the roof and eaves  
Were thickly scattered o'er,  
And yellow as they a sunbeam lay  
Along the cottage floor

"Sleep on, thou pretty, pretty lamb,"  
He hears the fond nurse say,  
"And if angels stand at thy right hand,  
As now belike they may,  
And if angels meet at thy bed's feet,  
I fear them not this day

"Come wealth, come want to thee, dear  
heart,  
It was all one to me,  
For thy pretty tongue far sweeter rung  
Than coined gold and fee,  
And even the while thy waking smile  
It was right fair to see

"Sleep, pretty bairn, and never know  
Who grudged and who transgressed,  
Thee to retain I was full fain,  
But God, He knoweth best!  
And His peace upon thy brow lies plain  
As the sunshine on thy breast!"



## *STRIFE AND PEACE*

The man of strife, he enters in  
Looks and his pride doth cease  
Anger and sorrow shall be to-morrow  
Trouble, and no release  
But the babe whose life awoke the strife  
Hath entered into peace.



